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'Bata' Reyes pockets P10.8 million in US billiards shootout

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Nida's lawyer questions filing of murder charges

By Armand N. Nocum

WEEKEND OF ITS SECOND ROUND OF PRELIMINARY investigations, the Department of Justice panel probing the Nida Blanca case has recommended the filing of murder charges against Mike Montano as a principal. Blanca, 61, was found dead in her condominium unit in Quezon City on Nov. 16.

Still dying to win the lotto? Read on

COMELEC, KBP's booby... For Ghost #1 that call another subsequent successful sale. Virginia G. Mercado, chairing a $264-million lottery jackpot in 2000, seemed swapping parents at breakneck speed.

Tuesday, December 6, 2005 / Vol. 29 / no. 361

Garci turns tables on solons

Lawyer says 20-30 lawmakers made calls

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER THE GLORY OF the Garmin, Garci is back in the limelight.

Accusing lawmakers of hypocrisy, the lawyer of Virgilio Garcillano yesterday named eight out of 20 to 30 congressmen who, he claimed, had talked to the former election commissioner during the 2004 polls.

"We believe that they are proven more qualified to speak on the high integrity and unquestionable character of former Commissioner Garcillano," lawyer Eddie Tamondong said, trying to turn the tables on his client's accusers.

Tamondong said he got the names from an "initial list" that Garcillano gave him and these lawmakers might "serve as character witnesses for and on behalf of our client."

Tamondong identified the eight as House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Tingog Rep. Jose Yap, Rep. Peter Cayetano, Pandaqui Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas, Cebu Rep. Daniel Mendoza, Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon, Bukidnon Rep. Rufus Rodriguez and Quezon Representative [illegible].

TURNOVER: Thai Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop (right) accepts the hosting flag for the 2007 Southeast Asian Games from Jose Cojuangco Jr., president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, during the closing ceremony of the 23rd SEA Games in Manila. Looking on is President Macapagal-Arroyo.

RP campaign ends in blaze of glory

By Ray Luarca

THE PHILIPPINES' DISMAL campaign in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games got its fitting ending yesterday.

The Filipinos officially wound up with their first overall championship and the Games, despite [illegible] allegations that were later denied, ended in a blaze of fireworks and a show of unity by the 11 competing nations at the Quezon Greenfield of the Rizal Park.

Adding fun and to finish, the Philippines posted its best ever haul of 113 gold, 84 silver and 94 bronze, eclipsing its previous highest output of 91-82-86 when the country last hosted the Games in 1991.

Thailand, in 11-time SEAG overall champion which will host the 2007 edition, ended up second with 87-78-134 tally.

Vietnam, which topped the general championship when it hosted the 2003 Games, wound up third with a 71-68-89 haul even as it completed a sought-gold sweep of the rowing three competitions in Tagaytay City yesterday.

Showing remarkable improvement in results, boxing, aquatics, men's [illegible], basketball, wrestling and rounding the six golds in the traditional host races, the Filipinos's medal count almost doubled their 49-59-75 production of two years ago.

The Filipino results turned out to be their most productive with 11 golds, displacing the Vietnamese as champions.

Greeted by [illegible] swimmer Miguel Molina and China-trained diver Jhoda Mae Perez, aquatics turned in nine golds, surpassing its contribution of five in Hanoi.

More SEAG stories in Sports

Hard labor for Garcia? Well, not really

By Luige A. del Puerto and Ed C. Catanaguan Jr.

IT SOUNDED LIKE A TERRIBLE fate but the penalty of "two years of hard labor" imposed by a military court on ex-Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia may be all an empty phrase, based on Philippine military practice.

Military prosecutors [illegible] yesterday said no officer who had received the penalty had been actually subjected to such punishment.

But convicted enlisted men had been made to spruce up military grounds, clean up living quarters and do other menial jobs, he said.

This means Garcia will not be made to or much to sweep the streets of Camp Crame, where he is now being held.

"In practice, the third time [illegible] was carried out," Brawner said the reporters. "It's inappropriate for an officer to do that [labor]."

In military parlance, "hard labor" means "often fatigue work," he said, adding, "Officers do not render extra fatigue work."

We have rediscovered best in Filipino—GMA

By Jaemilo W. Paya

THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF [illegible] scandals and controversies. But in the end, there were cause to smile and relief in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games for a [illegible] that ended for glory.

With the overall championship crown in hand, the Philippines had harvested an unprecedented 41,000 athletes and sports officials from 11 countries at the closing ceremonies yesterday at the Quezon Greenfield in Manila.

"We are on the road to becoming a sports power in Asia or the Pacific of Filipino fighting spirit and athleticism," said President Macapagal-Arroyo, elated by the [illegible] topping the medal race for the first time since joining the biennial meet in 1977.

"We have rediscovered the best in the Filipino, setting aside differences and choosing the world that we can move as one and go for the gold with incomparable unity and teamwork," said the President, who officially declared

INSIDE THE INQUIRER

Across the Nation: So many stories, so little space

By Jun Bandayrel
National Editor

PERHAPS "we are underrated or not as strongly convinced of the importance of expanding the business capability to report the news from the rest of the country ... as Reginald D. Aprosio, the newspaper's founding editor," according to former Inquirer Davao editor Ralph Cleofas.

"In the early 1990s, the editorial consensus to retreat and unload the steps that created what are now the well-equipped regional bureaus," Cleo first said.

The PDI Toronto Bureau was the first to be officially established in Cebu City on Aug. 1, 1991. Almost immediately after the PDI Mindanao Bureau was opened in Davao City [illegible] on Sept. 5, 1992, it received a [illegible] message that read: "Sir are in business" from the PDI Northern Luzon Bureau in Baguio City.

Other pioneering attempts were completed four years later, in March 1995, when the PDI Southern Luzon Bureau was put up in Legaspi City.

It was a far cry from the early years of the Inquirer when a handful of dedicated correspondents sacrificed their pieces by telephone and mailed their photos to the Inquirer. They reported directly to the provincial editor, who handled the "Provincial" Section. After a week or so, printed out a few [illegible] stories on the page was renamed "From Bataan to Tawi-Tawi" and later "Across the Nation."

Daily travel (the "pioneers"—Carlo P. Gomez of Bacolod City and Anselmo S. Roque of Puerto Princesa still active) writing for the paper before the [illegible] bureaus.

The bureaus then occupied small rented offices.

"Technologically, we were poor—a single telephone line, a laptop (which was the personal property of the bureau chief then), typewriters and a fax machine. The drivers and some months later. But we didn't complain. Processing the stories was even harder," said Mary Alexandra Arnaldo, chief of the Baguio Bureau.

In the early 1990s, correspondents [illegible]

A2
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Thai, RP corruption worsens – poll

HONG KONG—MULTINATIONALS PERCEIVE corruption is getting worse in Thailand and in the Philippines but is declining elsewhere in Asia, a report released yesterday shows.

The multinationals say corruption is the major obstacle to investment and business growth in Asia's developing economies.

Political and economic risk consultancy Hong Kong-based Political & Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC).

In contrast, Hong Kong and Singapore — two of the most developed Asian economies — were rated as the places where graft is most under control, PERC said.

Singapore topped the survey with a score of 0.69 where the best grade is zero and the worst is 10. Both governments used Hong Kong was second at 1.22 while Indonesia was the worst with a score of 9.44.

Japan was third, followed by South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam.

China is making the most progress, it said.

PERC noted that the survey respondents were the companies that actually make investments in the region. The survey was done between September and October this year covering 96 different companies (49 American, 20 European, 9 Australian, and 7 Canadian) with the majority holding offices in either Singapore or Hong Kong.

The gatherings of Singapore and Hong Kong reflect confidence in the judiciary system which is why the former British colonies have remained big recipients of foreign investment despite being below certain industries, and business, some of which happen to have close links with influential politicians," the consultancy said.

Although the survey showed that the Philippines and Thailand as the only two countries in the region where foreign investors perceive corruption has increased. Few noted that investors were willing to overlook Thailand's corruption but not in the Philippines.

"Thailand was still attracting large amounts of foreign investment while corruption is a growing deterrent to investment and economic growth in the Philippines, Perc said.

But the report that while Singapore shared the Philippines' poor reputation in fighting corruption, "it has not stopped Vietnam from posting one of the most rapid rates of economic growth in the region."

"To the extent that respondents said corruption is a deterrent to investment and business growth in the countries it probably doesn't mean that the country would have gotten more successful sign direct investments and growth even if it didn't have [to] have had to have a better check on corruption."

In Indonesia, graft is seen a major drawback for foreign investors but they are encouraged by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's drive to stamp out corruption, the survey showed.

"The legal system in that country remains highly suspect, but President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has stepped up the fight against graft," Perc said. Reuters, AFP and AFP and GMA Cyberwarrior

ANOTHER SNAFU

Navy command turnover aborted

By Dona Z. Pazolbuga

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN three months, Malacañang unceremoniously aborted the command turnover ceremonies for a top military position yesterday, once more prompting speculation of last minute lobbying.

Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga, the Armed Forces Inspector General, was all set to take over from outgoing Navy chief Vice Admiral Ernesto de Leon at 2 p.m. yesterday when the ceremony was cancelled at the last minute, subjecting him to the same embarrassment suffered by Lt. Gen. Samuel Ibrahim, the AFP Deputy Chief of Staff, last September.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters on Sunday that Mayuga had been appointed as Navy chief, an announcement later expected by a Navy spokesman. Ermita himself confirmed his appointment and, in interviews with reporters on Sunday, spoke about some of the plans and programs which he said he had outlined to the incoming top brass.

But at 9 a.m. yesterday De Leon was still through a spokesman that the turnover ceremony set at the Navy headquarters on Roxas Blvd. had been postponed "indefinitely."

Malacañang itself said late yesterday afternoon that the President had not yet decided whom to appoint as the next Philippine Navy chief.

"The truth is the decision not yet made on the notice that the President has not signed any appointment," said Bunye, who assured that the Palace had exerted every effort in saying that the President had not yet signed any appointment papers.

Bunye said the leadership void in the Navy would be "resolved soon." He did not explain why the President was taking too long.

Despite the snafu, Bunye said Mayuga should not be discouraged. "I believe the admiral is a professional who will not let this incident get in the way of performing his job," Bunye said.

De Leon, who had filed his retirement leave starting Dec 5, remains the Navy chief in the meantime.

The turnover programs starting Mayuga in the new Navy chief were hastily hidden away yesterday morning along with the banners and other paraphernalia for the anticipated ceremony.

Earlier De Leon or Mayuga would take oath yesterday AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga, who was supposed to preside over the ceremony, also did not appear early. With reports by Evelyn Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

Bolante back; Senate readies subpoena

By Nikko Dizon
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

JOCELYN "JOC JOC" BOLANTE, the former Agriculture undersecretary linked to the disbursement of the P728 million fertilizer fund, slipped back into the country unnoticed from Los Angeles, California, reliable sources at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport said.

The sources said Bolante was on Philippine Airlines flight PR 103 which arrived at 5:37 a.m.

Bolante left for the United States on Oct. 26, hours ahead of a Senate committee on agriculture inquiry into allegations the multimillion-peso farmers' fund was distributed in pre-administration lawmakers during the campaign period last year to boost President Macapagal-Arroyo's election chances.

Now that the dragon former official has returned to the country here is the alleged fertilizer scam is back, the Senate is not hesitant getting hold of him to testify things.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. said the Senate committee on agriculture had set a "special hearing" on the matter as he wanted to acknowledge after he studied the facts involving five times.

The committee was originally set to resume its investigation in January but Bolante's return prompted Magsaysay to consider a hearing on Monday.

"We'll have a hearing just to give him a chance to explain his role in the multimillion-peso scam on Monday afternoon. We'll be the only executive person to show how impacted his role was in the process," Magsaysay said in a phone interview.

Bolante was the agriculture official said to be responsible for allocating and distributing the funds for the Grassroots Management Improvement Program. The program was supposed to distribute fertilizer and other farm inputs to farmers through cooperatives and other government officials.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, December 6, 2005
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Sandigan raps prosecution, defense lawyers in Erap trial

By Melvin E Flores

BOTH PROSECUTION AND DEfense lawyers in the plunder trial of former President Joseph Estrada have been warned from making press statements that would court prejudice or diminish the integrity of the anti-graft court.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division gave the warning after Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio and Estrada's lawyers—former Bataan Rep. Prospero Ante Flamiano and ex-Senator Rene Saguisag—traded barbs for several minutes in open court over the alleged offensive language used in their motions and media statements.

Presiding Justice and Special Division Chair Teresita de Castro said the court had consistently ignored the derogatory statements made by prosecution and members of the defense panel because it did not want to be distracted from the case.

The court, however, took exception to Villa-Ignacio's statements to media that tend to "pressure the court."

Villa-Ignacio denounced as cowardice a motion filed by defense lawyers seeking cognizance for the former president was approved by the court. He also claimed that members of thirteen High School Class of 1971 would be committing the crime of bribery should they insist on paying for the expenses of Estrada's accordance to their golden jubilee celebration concert in Pasay City.

"We, foolproof should show up in ripe rubers you can pass such cakes," De Castro said.

In response, Villa-Ignacio apologized and said his remarks were not meant to pressure the court.

"My statements are directed against third parties seeking cognizance for Estrada," he told reporters after yesterday's court proceeding.

In the past month, Estrada's lawyers have intensified their legal actions seeking a modification in his custodial arrangement, which includes his possible release on cognizance to a person of known integrity.

Saguisag said he recently filed a motion on private letter for press interviews. He cited the Code of Professional Responsibility which said: "A lawyer shall not make public statements in the media regarding a pending case tending to arouse public opinion for or against a party."

ConCom set to endorse parliamentary form of gov't

By Norman Bordadora

THE CONSULTIVE COMMISSION (ConCom) on Charter change is expected that afternoon to adopt a resolution formally endorsing a shift to a parliamentary form of government in a new Constitution, a commission official told the Inquirer yesterday.

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, a professor at the University of the Philippines Graduate School of Business and co-chair of the ConCom committee on the form of government, said in an overwhelming majority of commission members would recommend the shift to a parliamentary system. From the presidential form, and there was nothing opponents of the change could do about it.

"There's nothing more we can do. All we can do right now is voice our opposition in the media and hope the public is enlightened when they study the new constitution in a plebiscite," Bernas said in an interview.

Arroyo said only six other ConCom members are opposed to the idea of changing the system of government, saying the parliamentary form would give politicians too much power.

"You give them both legislative and executive powers. They will have the power to make the policies and then implement them," Arroyo said.

"The national budget will become a huge pork barrel. Budget deliberations will just be partitioning the funds to determine who gets how much," he added.

Arroyo said that under a parliamentary system, there is no check and balance with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet except through the judiciary.

"That's not necessarily the case in both documents and never strengthening. If we are now disturbed by the way politicos are wielding limited power, what should we imagine will happen after they've been given virtually unlimited powers?" Arroyo said.

"And if we take the proponents of the parliamentary form as an indication of their solution to politicos, who in heaven's name would like propose a solution that gives even more power to politicos? If this isn't completely illogical, it is at least terribly confusing," he said.

Arroyo said the advocates of the shift to parliamentary argue that it is not form of government that is holding us back and preventing us from keeping economic pace with our neighbors.

"They argue the legislative gridlock built into the presidential system is the main problem and that eliminating this—which the fusion into a single body of the executive and legislative branches will do—will speed up our economic growth and development," Arroyo said.

"These arguments are so weak it is hard to believe that even those making them actually believe what they are saying. For every country with a parliamentary government that is rising ahead of us economically one can cite a country with a presidential system that is doing so well or better," he said.

Arroyo said that in Asia, while Malaysia and Thailand with their parliamentary systems are performing better than we are, South Korea and Taiwan are doing much better economically with their presidential systems.

"The economic performance of a country is a function of its economic policies, investor endowments and environmental conditions, not its form of government. China, an economic meritocracy, is not even a democracy," Arroyo pointed out.

Jose Abueva, ConCom chair, expressed confidence the commission will be able to finalize its recommendations for Charter change by its deadline of Dec. 15.

"We've been in close coordination with families from the Malacañang and the House starting. They have assured us they will not cut proposals and consider the findings of the consultations," Abueva said.

The House voted overwhelmingly last week to vote itself into a constituent assembly to make changes to the 1987 Constitution. The Senate's concurrence, which is apparently reluctant to give, is necessary to make the constituent assembly a reality.

OCAMPO

PALPARAN

Probe Palparan, Satur urges Ombudsman

BAYAN MUNA PARTYLIST REP. SATUR Ocampo yesterday asked the Ombudsman to investigate Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division based in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, for human rights violations.

Ocampo, deputy minority leader in the House of Representatives and leader of its independent bloc, also asked the Ombudsman to immediately suspend Palparan from his post pending resolution of the complaint.

He said Palparan's role in political assassinations, disappearances, arson and human rights violations wherever he had been assigned should be closely looked into.

Ocampo, who is Bayan Muna president, said the complaint clearly should block Palparan's promotion which is pending in the Commission on Appointments.

"Palparan does not deserve another day in the military. He only deserves the gates. Before him, the answer to legitimate dissent is to incarcerate and wipe out unarmed civilian activists off the face of the earth. In my view, the Ombudsman's office should be able to arrive at the conclusion if it undertakes a swift and fair investigation," Ocampo said.

Aside from Ocampo, representatives from other party-list organizations—Anakpawis and the Gabriela Women's Party—have long opposed Palparan's promotion.

They blamed Palparan for the series of killings of labor leaders in the Visayas and northern and southern Luzon.

Palparan has denied all the allegations against him. Marlene E. Pinlac

UERMMMC all set for homecoming

CALLING ALL GRADUATES OF THE University of the Eastern Manila-Manila Medical Center (UERMMMC). You're invited to the 30th alumni homecoming on Dec. 14-17, 2005. The homecomers this year are the silver jubilarians of Class 1980. The grand fellowship night will be held on Dec. 16, 2005, 6 p.m., at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Makati City.

For details, call the secretariat at tel. no. 7465771, or 09286748830.

'ROADBLOCK TO PEACE TALKS'

Reds hit EU for putting them on terror list

LOCAL COMMUNIST rebels yesterday denounced the European Union for blacklisting them as a terrorist group, saying this would hamper possible peace talks and increase the repression of their followers.

The Maoist Democratic Front (MDF), the international representative of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and their guerrilla arm, the New People's Army (NPA), also accused the EU of pandering to the United States.

Both the United States, the main ally of the Philippines, and the EU have put the communists on their lists of "international terrorist organizations," hampering the flow of funds to the insurgents from their sympathizers abroad.

In a statement issued in Manila, the MDF said that the giant-like movement had "never engaged in any transnational or cross-border act of violence upon its adversaries."

The rebels also said the EU listing had a paralyzing adverse effect on the founders of the communist movement, Jose Maria Sison, who is living in self-exile in the Netherlands.

The listing "subjects Ginoong Sison to social ostracism, inhuman and degrading treatment" as well as "punitive sanctions ... including the termination of the reserved income to his human existence," the MDF said.

This was in apparent reference to the monetary support Sison had been receiving from sympathetic groups which was now cut off due to the blacklisting.

The MDF also said that the move to list Sison "exacerbating to the paralysis" of the government peace negotiations with the government while emboldening reactionary forces to commit "human rights violations."

The CPP has waged a 36-year-long Maoist campaign to seize power in the country, including attacks on government forces and on rural businesses that refuse to pay their extortion demands.

In late November, an NPA spokesman warned that the rebels were going to step up their attacks in the coming weeks.

Peace talks between government and the communists ground to a halt last year after the rebels demanded the government consult them before it declared the EU and US terror blacklists. AFP

RP athletes lauded for winning crown

By Christine V. Esguerra and Philip C. Tubeza

PHILIPPINE LEADERS YESTERDAY lauded Filipino athletes for winning the country's first South East Asian Games championship, but acknowledged critics said their feat was tainted by the Thai boycott of shooting and blamed President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for the uncertainties.

"The sins of pseudo have a way of coming to roost," said Vice President Noli de Castro, who had accused the Thai boycott of exposing illegal gambling payoffs.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, an administration ally, described as a "hollow" victory the Philippines topping the games with 113 medals, 41 more than its nearest rival and insisted that Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made a public apology for unleashing the games controversy.

"Without an apology, Congress won't be convinced to approve [the] budget for the games," Arroyo said in an interview, hardening an impression, in defending the national budget, that the spirit of fairness does not always prevail in the Philippines whenever Malacañang is involved.

Arroyo had set aside P600 million for the games and showed the world "That we can move at—for us—a fast pace for gold with an unspeakable clarity and teamwork."

The dramas are too distant to subtract if we prepare well, work hard and show smiles," the 58-year-old President said.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal said the Philippines triumph was expected. "If you're on your own turf, you play well," he said. "We didn't cheat."

Archbishop Vidal said the Thai charges might have been related to Mr. Arroyo, who has been accused of manipulating last year's presidential election—a claim she has vehemently denied.

But Filipino athletes remained wild, said Cruz. "They gave us much. They did their best. They were mobile," said the Bagong Lipunan senator.

Jokes because of GMA

"We all three are undermined by distorting comments and painful jokes. And all three are not because of them but on account of their President."

Arroyo's spokesman Ignacio Bunye said appreciated the Filipino athletes' the same way that "the rain of praise here is rosy of getting transmitted to their children."

House Speaker Jose de Venecia said that as a Cabinet meeting yesterday, officials of the Commission on Higher Education announced that some colleges and universities were ready to extend scholarships to athletes "of achievement."

"If we can do this in the area of sports, I think we also can pull through in other endeavors, especially in political and economic reforms," Bunye said.

Disneyland tour?

Asked about reports that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo planned to take the athletes to Hong Kong Disneyland, Bunye said he heard that this would be courtesy of the private sector.

Administration congressmen hurried to increase government spending in sports, hiking that the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission next to be cut from P1.07 million in 2006 to P27 million in 2006.

"That is so unfair," said Bataan Rep. Mariano Pamaniello, a trainer of the Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee. "We should increase all our athletes."

Davao Oriental Rep. Joel Mayo Almario, chair of the House committee on games and amusements, said Congress should consider giving deserving athletes higher allowances and allocating more funds to upgrade sports facilities and training programs.

"This will not only boost the country's sports program and the people's overall fitness but surely the nation in a worldwide audience," he said.

Targeting more medals

Almario said the country should target more medals in the Olympics and Asian Games by choosing 30 sporting events with the best chances for gold and giving full backing to the athletes competing in them.

Despite the Thai criticism of the games, the Philippine government somersaults around the Thai monarchy of the "unfailing friendship" between Manila and Bangkok.

Foreign Secretary Edsel Custodio yesterday conveyed Mr. Arroyo's greetings to King Bhumibol Adulyadej on his 78th birthday, in a diplomatic feast held at the Rizal Hotel in Makati City. With reports from Christine D. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Rob Corcuvera

RP athletes wrap up smashing campaign

The 24-year-old Molina, a swimmer of the University of California in Berkeley, NCAA team, emerged the most bemedalled athlete in the three-day biennial games and a close and visible runner in the swim events.

3 golds, too

The Lilian I. Byrne, who'll be turning 20 on Saturday, also won all three golds.

Though the athletics competition was also to close their output from eight to nine, they still left one gold city of meeting their target of 40 golds since 40 was indeed in the event.

Bankrolled by the 2004 world pool champion Alex Pagulayan, who was good for three golds, and Rubilen Amit, who pocketed two, the billiards cue artists accounted for eight golds and cut short Vietnam's reign in billiards and snooker.

Reaping the benefits of heritage exposure, the Filipino boxers emerged overall champions in the event held in Bacolod City with eight golds, including four from the dreaded side, as against the Thais' four golds.

Mark Thailand fanned on the Philippines' six-pointers allegedly ignoring pitches by referees and even instructions. Filipino fight fans in Bacolod City felt otherwise.

'Biased scoring'

The final middleweight bout between Filipino Reynaldo Galido and thirteen boxer member Surin Petsuthiyarat had to be stopped after the first round with the Thai declared the winner after four rounds of unanimous boxing and plastic bottles into the ring because of what they perceived to be biased scoring.

Boxer Benjamin Tolentino, reducing his weight by more than 10 kilos, won the Philippines' first gold of the 24 Rizal Days, when the underrated host team went to it as bold.

Welterweight ranked Geo Ildefonso, Eric Tuino and Ulysses Rex Edemacio also broke the Filipino streak players also showed their stuff by clinching the semi's singles, the men's team and the mixed doubles titles at the Rizal Memorial Tennis center.

Losing up on their footy billing, the Filipino football squad for four gold through Jan Glenzie and Efrig rookie Marlorie Tee in the men's and women's matches and Ma. Cecilia Pajo in the women's singles and G. Ramos and Jessica Ishikawa in the men's doubles.

Pacesetter trooper Ariel Pera-ta won the lone Filipino (400) second breaker when he showed 66.47 meters.

Jane Pagamaca finished the individual golf title and combined with Jay Bayron, Michael Biber and Marvin Dumandan to join the Philippines in women's team events, while Rodney Ada finished second that he's still. The regular's host at 41 points ed by topping the 8 Kilo division. It was Bayron's seventh straight SEAG title.

Expectedly, the Philippine team topped the football and competition until he did the RP Who Beat and SP title. Gaby is softball held at the Bocaue Sports Arena in Pasig.

There were disappointments, of course.

For the first time, the Filipino swimmers got shut out of a gold medal at the Tapestry International Convention Center, where they targeted five golds.

The RP riders, on the other hand, could only muster two golds out of a projected six.

Shining moments

Medalless bets also made their mark in the nine-day games.

Singapore's legendary hoodoo line won six gold medals at the Team Aquatics Center in Los Baños, Laguna, to boost her gold haul to a record 40 in a career spanning seven SEA Games. She notched her output in Vietnam, where she was named top athlete of the Games.

Olympic and world champion Paeruna Thongsuk of Thailand and Asian Games gold medalist Ratapon Sriaudom, both of the flyweight 56kg class with a gold medal, but third international title in separate weight classes.

Arlene Arlene medalist Rosanjel Pen Bloom and former world champion Joseph Zeng Thailand, of Thailand, topped their respective divisions at the expense of Filipinos medalists in the boxing finals.

Vietnam falled in soccer

Vietnam's bid for the Games' crown ends two again failed by Thailand, 1-0, Sunday night.

The Filipino men and women boxers showed improvement, bringing thousands of fans to both the Panaad Park and Complex in Bacolod and the Marikina Sports Center pitch.

Indonesia, bolstered by the presence of defending Olympic and Asian Games champion Triyatno Hidayat, who defended his national competition, sweeping the men's and women's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

While there were no Asian Games or Olympic records broken, some were remarkable in swimming and track and field were raised.

The Filipino athletes, of course, emerged the biggest winners of all.

We have rediscovered best in Filipino—GMA

Viewer page A3

the Games closed.

Amid spectacular fireworks that lit the night sky and a crowd enthroned in an extravaganza of smoke, the nine-day regional competition came to an emotional close when the federation flag was lowered.

An orchestra of musicians of the Games' closing song, "We're All Just One," was played as the federal flag was raised again.

As the host nation, the Philippines was set for criticism for topping the games' medal tally after its biggest biased offshoring, a diplomatic row over biased journalistic talent "But Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra questioned the results of certain events.

But presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said the controversy was "a matter of opinion" as soon as this controversy began with an impressive medley tallies of the Philippine Sea Royal Police decided.

"But personally, my concern and interest is not to see who's the winner," Bunye said in response to questions raised by Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Kantathi Suphamongkhon after the Philippine Sea Royal Police decided.

"The Philippines did not prepare a thing for the games," Bunye said. "We prepared for 10 years and we did not prepare."

Bunye said the Philippines had hosted many offshoring, a diplomatic row over biased journalistic talent "But Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra questioned the results of certain events.

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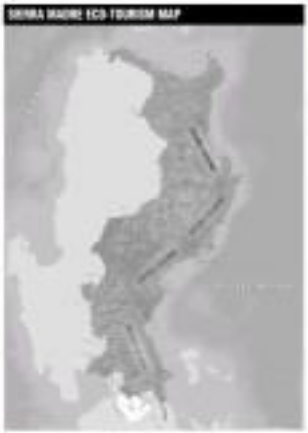
SIERRA MADRE ECO TOURISM MAP



600-km ecotourism trail under way in the Sierra Madre

By Blanche S. Rivera

IT'S NO YELLOW BRICK ROAD that it has all the trappings of a wonderland.

The Sierra Madre Mountains, the country's longest mountain range and one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world, is being primed to become the top ecotourist destination in the Philippines.

Environmentalists and local governments launched last week the 600-km Sierra Madre Trail, a unique trek through the 1.4-million-hectare mountain range that is home to 3,000 species of plants and the wildest variety of birds in Luzon.

Experts from Miriam PEACE (Public Education and Awareness Campaign for the Environment) mapped out a trail from Palanan in Cagayan, the northernmost tip of the Sierra Madre, to the UP Land Grant in Quezon, south of Metro Manila, as its ecotourism zone. Miriam PEACE, the outreach arm of Miriam College's Environmental Studies Institute, is convener and manager of the Alayon Madre Trail (SMT) program.

Appalachian Trail

Inspired by the Appalachian Trail in the United States, the 600-km trail features over 200 destinations in the nine provinces traversed by the 36th Madre mountains: Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna and Quezon.

"This is the first biodiversity corridor trail in the country," Donna Paz Reyes, Miriam PEACE project coordinator, said during the trail's launch at Hidden Valley Eco-Adventure Resort in Siniloan, Laguna.

The Sierra Madre range is one of only three biodiversity corridors in the Philippines identified by Conservation International. The other two are in Palawan and eastern Mindanao.

Bird watching

A biodiversity corridor is a gateway to critical ecosystems that boast of wide varieties of plants and animals, including species found only in the Philippines, as well as species threatened with extinction.

The 600 km trail is punctuated by the best bird-watching points, the areas with the most diverse flower species, and other flora and fauna, and sites for religious and other cultural expeditions.

"The idea is to have a single ecotourist tourist destination with focus on its biodiversity corridor," Miriam PEACE said in a statement.

Three-pronged

The Sierra Madre trail is three-pronged. It has land trail and, a mountain bike trail and a coastal trail.

The lowland trail follows the national highways from Metro Manila: the Maharlika Highway to the north and the Marilaque Highway in the south.

Interesting points on the lowland trail are the Bulalakaw Protected Landscape, Bak-en-Bato National Park, Northern Sierra Madre National Park, and the Cayanan Caves in Nueva Vizcaya. To the south are the Peñablanca Caves and Avelina Zoo in Rizal.

One week

Reyes said a week would be "considerable enough" to take in the wonders of the lowland trail, but to fully experience the nature and culture of the trail's would require almost a month.

The coastal trail features beaches, surfing and dive sites, and treks in Luzon's Pacific coast that can be reached primarily by boat. One such place is the Baler-Palanan trail whose councilor is excited for more ecotourist to flog.

The mountain bike trail is arguably the most challenging of the three options and is expected to be the most popular among foreign trekkers and mountaineers, Reyes said.

Safety issue

Miriam PEACE is still developing a single trail for the mountain foot path and working with local governments to ensure safety both for the locals and local visitors.

The Alayonmadre trail is one tour package that would be offered when the Sierra Madre Trail opens in February. It follows the route of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, the Philippines' first president, when he crossed the Sierra Madre from San Mariano to Palanan to escape pursuing American forces during the Philippine-American War.

Local guides

Reyes said the local governments in areas covered by the foot trail would assemble guides who not only know their way around the forests but are familiar with the biodiversity sites.

The local guides would accompany tourists and educate them on the importance of preserving the Sierra Madre Mountains. The local governments would identify safe areas that would be opened up to tourists.

Environmentalists see protecting ecotourism as a viable development option for the country which is being marketed by the government as one of the best untouched areas in the world.

Population pressure

Population pressure is also taking a toll on the forests. Around 10 million people live in the Sierra Madre, among them the Dumagats, Kalingas, Ibanags, and Ifugaos.

"With the damaging effects of environmental problems, there is a need to unify conservation initiatives... to ensure the harmonious co-existence of people and nature in the long term," Miriam PEACE said.

Reyes admits it's a long way to go for Sierra Madre's caretakers and visitors, but because they are on the right track, the journey can't be that bad.

HOUSE VS SENATE

Pork fights to hold up budget– Villar

By Leila B. Salaverria

SEN. MANUEL VILLAR YESTERday warned that deliberations on the 71.5M-million national budget for 2006 could reach an impasse because of "disguised pork barrels" and predicted that this and other delays would force the government to work under a truncated 2005 budget during the first three months of next year.

Speaking at the Kapihan sa Maynila forum yesterday, the chair of the Senate committee on finance said the increases in the proposed 2006 budget would likely be subjected to extensive discussion, hampering the budget's passage.

But he added it would be important to scrutinize additional projects in the budget, which include the Ilaya Assistance Support Fund and the Kalayaan Barangay Progress Fund, items these would be funded by additional taxes collected under the expanded value-added tax law.

Some senators had voiced concern earlier over the two new funds, which will require a total outlay of P8 billion. They suspected that these were new forms of pork barrel, a known source of kickbacks.

"Some of the projects are good but they would be using 'SSS' earnings," Villar said. "We have to see where the money goes because most of these projects are just disguised pork. We might forget that the primary reason we imposed the VAT is to fix the country's finances. If we are so lax to spend the extra dollar, we might end up getting back our old financial problems."

The senator said that it was in balancing the use of FMF funds with the need to pursue fiscal reforms such as closing the budget deficit that he saw a deadlock emerging.

"We need to balance the funding of these projects with our financial needs. That is probably where there would be an impasse between the senate and the lower house," he said.

Villar said it was unrealistic to expect that the budget bill would be forwarded to the Senate in January since it was still being discussed at the House's committee level. February was a more likely date for the bill to reach the Senate, Villar said, adding that the bicameral conference would probably be held in March.

VILLAR

Insular Life's 95th Anniversary Treat for its Policyholders

As our way of saying thank you to all those who have entrusted to Insular Life their future financial security, we offer these anniversary treats:

Guaranteed Issue Offer

From November 1 to December 16, 2005, Insular Life policyholders may apply for an additional insurance coverage, without the need for a medical examination. To qualify for the offer, a policyholder must:

a. have an in-force policy that was medically underwritten as standard and issued from January 1, 2003 up to October 31, 2005; a policyholder whose policy was issued with a standard rating on the basis of his agent's Non-Medical Authority will not qualify for this offer;
b. be at least 15 months old but not more than 50 years old as of the effective date of the new policy; and
c. not have undergone any major operation, nor have contracted a serious medical impairment after the last policy was issued.

A qualified policyholder may apply for an additional coverage equal to the face amount of the basic policy issued previously (inclusive of STAR), if any), up to a maximum of P2 million. This is on condition that the additional coverage will not raise the policyholder's total all-coverage (with the company-issue policy plus existing policies) to more than P12 million. For more information, contact your existing agent or call Insular Life's Agency Relations and Service Staff at 771-1818 loc. 3318 and look for Ms. Iris Arenas.

CASHandog ng Insular Life, I-Text Mo, Info Mo

Policyholders of Insular Life with resident policies can text their latest valid contact information to Insular Life and get the chance to win as much as P91,222 in CASHe drawn on December 2005 and February 2006. To join, text: INSULARLIFE Policy Number/Last Name/Birth Date/Home Phone. Birth Date is in month/day format, and Home Phone with area code, for non-MM numbers. Example: INSULARLIFE A2000000/Flores/12/09/64/ 8669911

Send to 2327 for Globe subscribers and 0917-8912327 for non-Globe subscribers.

Raffle Mechanics

1. An entry will be considered valid only if it follows the prescribed text message format specified above. Each text message sent will cost the sender P5.00.
2. Only one (1) raffle entry will be considered for one (1) valid policy number. For policy number with multiple assignees, only the last valid message sent will be considered.
3. Winners will be determined by electronic raffle draw. Only in-force policies at the time of draw will be declared valid winners.
4. There will be two (2) raffle draws: December 2005 and February 2006.
5. Non-winning raffle entries in the December 2005 draw will be included in the February 2006 draw.
6. If a policyholder wins more than once, he/she gets the prize with the higher value.

Names of winners will be published in major newspapers. Winners will be notified through registered mail. Prizes must be claimed within 60 days from the date of notice. For further inquiries, visit any Insular Life branch nationwide, call IL Call Center at 771-1818 local 6624 or log on to: www.insularlife.com.ph.

Chic to 95 with the UP Singing Ambassadors

Believing in the unique talents of the Filipino, Insular Life brings to you a special concert featuring the internationally acclaimed UP Singing Ambassadors on December 16, 2005, 7:30 p.m. at the Insular Life Theater, Insular Life Corporate Center, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa. Insular Life employees, agents, policyholders and friends of Insular Life are all invited to this event celebrating the best in the Filipino musical talents. For more information call Ms. Aileen Divinian at 771-1818 loc. 3321.

Partnership Beyond Time

Insular Life will honor its long-time corporate clients who continue to trust Insular Life for their customized and complicated insurance needs. Dubbed as Partnerships Beyond Time, to be held on February 15, 2006 at the Insular Life Corporate Center, it will be a night of thanksgiving and appreciation of the enduring relationship established between Insular Life and its various corporate clients. Among the corporations that will be honored are more than Phoenix & Caltex, Mapúa de Development Corporation, Colgate-Palmolive, 3M, Lopez Group of companies, Coca-Cola Export, National Power Corporation and Manila Electric Energy. For more information call Ms. Andrea Sze-Juan at 817-4201 local 1197.

INSULAR LIFE 95 True to you.

Garci turns tables on solons

From page A1

Jose Rafael Ramos and Estelle Issarol

Four of them are opposition members.

As of late yesterday afternoon, three of the congressmen—Zarate, Golez and Sandoval—denied talking to Garcillano, with one of them denouncing the allegation as laughable.

Casanova said he talked to Garcillano in February but it was about a local politician and not about the elections.

Only teasers

Tanseco said Garcillano denied it was his voice on the "Hello Garci" tapes, but the lawyer did not categorically say his client said the Pasig. that did not fully deny the conversation.

Not unusual

The tapes of supposed wiretapped conversations between Mr Arroyo and Garcillano plunged the President into the worst political crisis of her administration and almost led to her ouster from office.

Garcillano, who recently emerged from more than five months in hiding, is expected to testify in a joint committee hearing of the House of Representatives tomorrow.

What we are saying here is that during the election period, it's not unusual or abnormal for government officials to call election officials," Tanseco said.

"Sometimes they might say, 'Something is happening here. There are terrorists here.' Those kinds of calls. That is not unusual."

"So, why were they so aggrieved that Mr. Garcillano were being called [on his phone], when in fact those were normal, routine lines. That is what I call hypocrisy. So, he might as well come out with the matter of those who called him," Tanseco said.

'Let them deny it'

He said the public will only "discount those denials and lies with any shred." "They talked with Garcillano either in person or on the phone," he said.

Tanseco said the wiretapping was allegedly done by "rogue elements in several cities they said Garcillano talked about.

"What we want is for the explanations to come from them. We want it to come from the horse's mouth. Be candid quite that they say it," he said.

"Let them deny it. I am sure some of them will make denials. Those will challenge them to a declaratory test," he added.

PHOTO BY Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano surfaces in Caraballo. (AP PHOTO)

Tanseco said the three would not cooperate on "nothing related to the attempted Hello Garci coup" during the House hearing tomorrow.

No Senate appearance

He said Garcillano might not be able to attend a separate Senate hearing on Thursday.

"We have to go off. I [Garcillano] would be under high pressure with only a 24-hour notice," the lawyer said.

Tanseco said his client had never complained that it was his voice on the "Hello Garci" tapes or that Estelaniano had talked to Mr Arroyo.

"He has repeatedly said that it was not his voice. That he was not the one being talked to. But even Estelaniano [The voice didn't even sound like him]," he said.

Tanseco said his friend was planning to file charges of illegal wiretapping and conspiracy against those who produced the "Hello Garci" tapes and those who disseminated them.

This could be done once "sinama," said not just the victims, could file cases against those who violated the antiwiretapping law, he said.

Golez categorically denied talking to Garcillano personally or by phone.

"The statement of Garcillano including my name as among those who allegedly provocative or by phone talked to him is crazy and a lot of lies," Golez said.

"I did not know him from Adam prior to the Garci-tape controversy."

Golez said he was consulting with his lawyers to study legal actions to take against Garcillano.

"I have many all my enemies in Batangas by heart but this is the first time I've heard of their intent to use Garcillano's political avenues," he added.

An old issue

Escudero dismissed the claim that he talked to Garcillano in connection with the vandalism of his father, Salvador Escudero, stating that this was an "old issue" that had been raised before.

"First of all, we know my father's character never got good from the start, hence no need to call him," Escudero said. "Second, the statement is evoking ghost of political blackmail in that they are coming more as if to threaten me with the Garci controversy," Senator Escudero said to prevent us from working for truth."

"Instead of directing the issue, he should just answer one simple question: is it his voice in the tapes?" he said.

Casanova said he was ready to submit to an impartial investigation and "face any motion", but that Garcillano should not divert the issue from the Arroyo's alleged conversations with the former poll official.

"The issue is not who called but what was called Garcillano," Casanova said.

Only for clean elections

Sandoval said he visited Garcillano first only in October or November last year, and it was to follow up two election cases involving his father that had been pending before the Commission on Elections.

He added that he only wanted to hasten the resolution of the cases.

Suarez admitted talking to Estelaniano "once or twice" about a local election matter in Quezon but denied any wiretapping.

"I just wanted to ensure clean and honest elections in my area," he said.

Sergo clarifies

As for Senator Sen. Sergio Osmeña III described as Osmeña report quoting him as saying that Garcillano's work should be pulled out to make him tell the truth.

Osmeña said his statement was taken out of context. He said he made it as a joke after he was asked when the Senate would do if Garcillano appeared before the chamber and hid through his teeth.

"I replied ... pull out all his teeth! It was a joke, of course ... Have to be careful about text jokes in the future."

Hard labor for Garcia? Well, not really

From page A1

Petrasa said convicted soldiers are made to perform only jobs did so while held in so-called disciplinary barracks, but this stops when they are transferred to the New Bilibid Prisons.

What constitutes hard labor varies from country to country.

In Japan's Barbarian prisons, the most outrageous of about 20 US sentences serving time includes kitchen work and cleaning cell blocks.

A US serviceman jailed in Japan in connection with the rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl in 1995 complained he was made to scrub eight hours a day assembling cell pieces and washing state parts.

In the dark

Police officials in charge of building security in custody said they had no idea how to carry out the "hard labor" portion of the penalty meted out on the former Armed Forces corporal.

Garcia received a dishonorable discharge and was stripped of his retirement benefits after a tribunal found him guilty of violating Articles of War 96 and 97 for not declaring his true name and for being a "green card" holder or having permanent residence status in the United States.

Primarily, he was not a Filipino citizen," Camp Crame commander Chief Supt. Geary Barias said. "We have not carried out hard labor in our custodial center before."

High-profile prisoners

Barias said his office would simply wait for specific instructions from the Armed Forces.

Garcia was brought to the Philippine National Police Custodial Center in Camp on order of the Sandiganbayan, which is also trying Garcia for plunder and perjury.

The center for "high risk" and high-profile detainees is located in the heart of the camp. Undetectable high walls topped by barbed wire shroud's 36 rooms are guarded 24 hours a day by policemen armed with automatic rifles.

Garcia's room

Garcia's temporary home is a 4x6 metre room with a fan ceiling. It can be for at times but has an electric fan, according to Custodial Center administration chief Zaldy Kintes.

The building has one TV, which the inmates decide after viewing their votes. They are also allowed to exercise regularly, Kintes said.

"He has food taken in from outside because I think he is on a special diet," she said.

Kintes also said the court martial's decision to convict Garcia rendered he automatically removed by the office of the AFP Chief of Staff.

It will still pass through two reviews if the AFP chief of staff affirms the verdict. The decision will then be sent to Malacañang for final approval.

More cases ahead

Only then, if finally approved, will Garcia be sent to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

Petrasa said the corresponding papers in the Sandiganbayan, Petrasa said, adding that Garcia may remain at Crame for the duration of the trial.

The case stemmed from allegations that Garcia illegally amassed wealth while he was undersecretary.

Malacañang yesterday said the government would pursue all pending cases against the ex-comptroller.

Get off easily?

"The military court ruled over on those [charges] covered by military justice. He is not off the hook as far as other more serious cases are concerned such as plunder," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye was reacting to criticism that Garcia got off relatively easy in the court-martial and that his alleged collusion in the mid-air removal unscathed.

The Ombudsman has accused Garcia of amassing over P300 million in assets and owning undeclared property in the United States.

"Plunder is a serious charge. He should answer this," said Bunye. Plunder is punishable by death.

Bunye said newly appointed Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo Gutierrez would pursue Garcia's case "as required by law". With AFP dispatch

Endless list of stories from the provinces

■ BUTUNG Indio filtered the grounds of the once impenetrable Moro rebel fortress Camp Abubakar left to government hands after a month of fighting. but PSI Mindanao Bureau correspondent Nestor Burgos reported that the real trouble erupted later as the war launched by President Joseph Estrada in 2000. Much hardship he saw the children in the evacuation centers.

■ JEB Visayas Bureau correspondent Jose Antonio nearly drowned when the fierce of a rescue mission to Panaon in Southern Leyte capsized in rough seas on Dec. 20, 2003. The day before, landslides swept the island's three towns, killing about 200 people.

■ EC Cayabyab, JEB Metro Bureau correspondent, was saying bombs Man when someone riot which smashed the police station 20 meters from his parish church in Quinapondan, Eastern Samar, on June 22, 2000. After two hours of gunfight, the rebels withdrew, reminding the police chief his three sons—awake, asleep and at school—as imprints of terror on the minds of the parishes.

■ "I had no choice but to wait for the slender moment every photographer wishes to capture," PDI Mindanao Bureau correspondent Bobby Timonera wrote. He had just witnessed the ascension by flying squad of two persons convicted of frustrated murder, car theft and robbery by a Moro rebel court in Marsa, Lamao del Sur, on Oct. 6, 1997.

The stories are numerous, the details still crisp and gripping to the minds of the bureau's perennial correspondents as when they were first sent one copy to their barracks before these finally made it to the newspaper's front pages.

Front row outside Metro

The reporters had the best seats in the Moro, Mindanao, Northern Command and Southern Luzon skirmishes give the hapless a vital strategic advantage in the media industry.

For the past 14 years, these stalwarts have brought readers to the front row of events that took place outside Metro Manila. They offered a wide coverage of varied topics, and a trained perspective and individual interpretation of the issues involved—in the shortest time possible.

From the provincial stories, readers learned about armed hostilities between soldiers and rebels of separatist groups, clashing the opportunities of the feud power supremacy between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front in Jolo, the personal encounters of South Buddhapas, Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, Angelo de la Cruz and Robert Tarnaguy; Mr. Fernandez's capture and labor fears, Lake Shaughan's eel, Japan, Liber earthquakes, typhoons and other natural disasters, mining strikes, palace coups and more.

Reporters also reporting on issues known more in the region," said Fernandez. "Bottom line: the business are not just exciting stories of corruption deals. We cope tasks, check bad governors, cross-check facts, names and dates, check election statements, and give stories his and notes."

Through the regional offices, the bureaus has provided media access to all corners nationwide, most especially to the marginalized, and has drawn them to discussions on crucial matters that affect them.

Man-on-the-street reactions

A recent example was the bureaus' informal survey of man-on-the-street reactions to President Macapagal-Arroyo's involvement in the "Hello Garci" tapes. The banners were motherhood and in less than a day the paper got varied responses from the widest sectors.

"So many stories, so little space," the correspondents lament. At present, the newspaper uses only about 60 percent of their stories.

But they find encouragement and great challenge in seeking out more stories that matter. They also thought that their stories have made an impact in promoting social and human values, the environment, the rights of indigenous peoples, the small entrepreneurs and the youth, among other subjects, according to Florelei Bolinao-Lim, the

Southern Luzon Bureau chief.

Now, stories with personal slant have not subdued even by readers abroad through the Inquirer online edition at INQ7.net. Some of them are dished out by the Inquirer News Service as breaking news or feed to Inquirer-related papers—Inquirer Libre and Inquirer Company—and other publications like Daily News, Business and Tempo.

Some correspondents have ventured into broadcasting through INQ7.

Vocation

"Writing can be an exciting and lucrative profession to some, but it is more of a vocation to me," said Fr. Cyrus Quinto Jimenez, bureau chief of Eastern Samar. "On Boxing occasions, I preach to people but whenever I have the opportunity to write, it serves as a lifetime test. To me one's before can be affirming enough but to shape public opinion is more rewarding."

Across the Nation: So many stories, so little space

From page A1

dents and their own representatives, and they made inroads to the business, which then re-invested them. The edited stories were routed to the central desk in Manila.

In areas where there were no bureaus or bureaus in which editorial deadline was closing in, the correspondents phoned in their stories—saved for saved, punctuation marks included. "The other normal type a typical military radio room looked like, recalls Cherie Lim, "Mesmerizing indeed."

Correspondents are paid depending on the length of their published articles (character count replaced the per-column-inch system) and the photos. The news outs receive team, portables, shortwaves, mobile phones, wired internet and telephones, and training to upgrade their journalistic skills. These working is "hot spots" are covered by insurance. Legal assistance is extended to those facing libel suits.

A daily menu of about 30 stories is routed to the National Desk

PHOTOS BY Correspondents Carla P. Gomez and Jonathan S. Bagaoisan

partment and fed to the newsthe Metro Section. Its weekly features pages—Inquirer Northern Luzon (Wednesdays), Inquirer Southern Luzon (Thursdays), Inquirer Visayas (Saturdays) and Inquirer Mindanao (Sundays), the front and other news pages, and the other regular sections.

Bureau chiefs now account for almost one-fourth of the content of The Inquirer.

"The news was only getting the

From page A1

Sunday, December 2, 2001

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HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY

Church tackles issue of bioethics in confab

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN CHINA, TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE abides by its "one child" policy, the government set up mobile "abortion vans."

In the field of stem cell research, one Chinese biologist quietly cloned 100 human embryos, claiming a 5-percent success rate.

A fellow scientist surreptitiously sent a much higher, combating human DNA with a rabbit's egg for "interspecies cloning."

In Thailand, condom use is high but so is the rate of sexually transmitted diseases.

In the Philippines, controversies abate over a mere population and seem to curb the growth rate.

Indeed, human life and dignity are in peril in this side of the world and the Roman Catholic Church is challenged to act soon, according to Cardinal Archbishop and bioethics expert Leonardo Legaspi.

"There is an urgency for the churches of Asia to address these issues in the manner as obvious—these issues directly affect the daily lives of millions of people living in Asia," said Legaspi in his keynote in yesterday's opening of the Third Asia International Congress on Bioethics at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

It was the first time the conference spearheaded by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life was held in Asia.

"The bioethical issues prevalent in the continent are varied, heavy, at once also posing various doorknock challenges — challenges that in turn call for manifold tasks," Legaspi said.

For Bishop Elio Sgreccia, the Vatican's foremost authority on bioethics and vice-general of the conference, "It concerns consequences to the right to life and the protection and promotion of every human being from the first instance of its existence until the human death, more, for defined today as being a principle of quality of human life."

Challenges to bioethics life vary between developed countries like Singapore, Japan, China and South Korea, and developing countries like the Philippines, Sgreccia said.

In Japan and Singapore, for instance, fortified apartments allow most of their respective governments' aggressive efforts to divert up new industries that could "eat up a favorable setting for human cloning."

The Church is morally opposed to the research considering that early living human embryos are just fully developed. Like the ones cells have been removed, by by all known procedures are described in "therapeutic cloning."

In the Philippines, legislators blamed politicians' slowness for passing a picture of overpopulation in the 1970s and by congressional efforts to manage the population.

Despite up its pesky forms, the pollutants noted that as less than the United States had

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Dirty stations get 2 cop chiefs fired

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR General Arturo Lomibao has sacked two precinct commanders and replaced them with younger officers for failing to keep their own "world class" police stations tidy.

Lomibao ordered Supt. Romeglio Gregorio, chief of the Bonbon Police in Aklan province, and Senior Supt. Chief Supt. Joseph Dennis Mendoza, chief of the Bikutang Dingginan Police, with Chief Supt. Arnel Ferrer to head.

Before his appointment to Bonbon, Mendoza was head of Lomibao's security staff.

"We are personally handpicked by the PDP chief to ensure that the high standards of police service and the upkeep of the world class police stations [followed] will be maintained," said police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil. Gregorio failed to keep his and police station's public school, according to Bataoil.

Lomibao went from his a surprise inspection last week. He found the stations wanting in cleanliness, and to think that the police service was "world class." He said will "The police chief in Bikutang committed a similar offense."

To keep the Bonbon police station clean, officials have brought of being a police billboard to town, the police want to work jointly with the Department of Tourism to keep the station clean.

"A police station is not a hotel, officers [assigned there] should keep it clean," Bataoil said. Jaime A. del Puerto

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Chief, Intellectual Property Rights Division

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)

Col. Noel O. Delos Reyes, CSEE

Police Senior Superintendent, DSC

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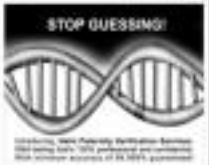

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

King to Thaksin: Think before speaking

BANGKOK, THAILAND—ALREADY UNDER attack from a publisher who is drawing thousands to his rallies, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has been advised by the country's revered king to be more open to criticism.

Sing Bhumibol Adulyadej talked at length Sunday in his annual birthday speech about Thaksin's inability to handle criticism, adding that even the king has made mistakes, and it is better to know if one has erred.

"Anyone in a very high-profile position must be able to take criticism lightly," the king said in the speech, which was broadcast on radio and television and lasted more than an hour.

THAKSIN

Bhumibol, who turned 78 Monday, rarely speaks about political issues and does his every word on the subject is regarded as significant. Although a constitutional monarch, the king wields great power through the force of his personality and a lifetime of service on behalf of the country's have-nots.

The saying "The king can do no wrong" is "culturally extremely insulting to the king because why can the king do no wrong? That would mean that the king is not human," he said. "The king can do wrong."

He also reminded Thaksin, who is one of Thailand's richest men, to think before spending and that he is not his intentions, otherwise he would regret it later. He criticized judges making money outsiders before he became king, but noted he also had to do so himself.

"If I weren't careful, I would probably be dead already. This is the nature of politics or being in the public eye," he said.

Thaksin, who has filed massive lawsuits against his critics, should not run them because it will only create more further problems, the king added.

The most recent target of Thaksin's ire has been outspoken publisher Sondhi Limthongkul, who has mixed up the biggest political crisis facing the prime minister in his nearly five years in power.

Sondhi has accused Thaksin of corruption, abuse of power and disrespect for the monarchy.

Sondhi has set up a showdown with Thaksin for Dec. 9, when he has called for a half million people to turn out in Bangkok's main park.

Thaksin has responded by Sondhi's attacks with a half-dozen lawsuits seeking billions of baht (tens of millions of dollars) in damages for defamation. He says it's a matter of defending his good name.

Thaksin has been at odds with the press since taking office in 2001. Critics say his administration has manipulated press coverage, forced the cancellation of TV and radio shows that criticized him, and colluded with political and business allies to take over media companies to eliminate independent news outlets. AP

Saddam defense team walks out of Iraq court

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—SADDAM HUSSEIN's defense team walked out of the court Monday after the chief tribunal judge refused to allow former Attorney General Ramsey Clark to challenge the tribunal's legitimacy in an address to the motion.

After the lawyers walked out, Saddam told the judge: "You are imposing lawyers on us. They are imposed lawyers. The court is imposed by itself. We reject that."

Clark tried to address the court, saying he needed only two minutes to present his argument. But Chief Judge Rizgar Mohammed Amin said the tribunal had been established under the law by an elected Iraqi government and that only Saddam's chief lawyers could address the hearing.

Amin said the defense should submit its motion in writing and warned that if the defense walked out then the court would appoint replacement lawyers.

"We reject the appointment of court employees to defend us," Saddam said.

Mr. and his half brother Barzany Ibrahim then chanted "Long Live Iraq, Long Live the Arab nation."

When the judge explained that he was ruling in accordance with the law Saddam replied, "This is a law made by Americs and does not reflect Iraqi sovereignty." AP

US accused of abusing Iraq mandate with detentions

BAGHDAD—THE US military is abusing its United Nations mandate in Iraq by detaining thousands of people without due process of law, a senior UN official said.

The Iraqi government itself violated after the US invasion of 2003 is also guilty of major human rights abuses, including holding people without charge in secret jails "tortured" system, the country, John Pace, human rights chief for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), said.

Referring to accusations of corruption among Iraqi justice officials and police, Pace said illegal detentions were feeding rather than curbing revolt.

"There is no question that non-action has to be addressed.

But we are equally sure that the remedies being applied ... are not the best way of eliminating terrorism," Pace said. "More terrorists are being created than are being eliminated."

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also voiced concern about mass detentions without charge, which US commanders say are a legitimate response to security threats under UN Security Council Resolution 2336, their mandate for occupying Iraq.

But in some of the strongest UN comments to date, Pace said in an interview on Sunday that the system, including the powers, duration and conditions of detention, were "not consistent with ethical international norms as I [left]" and complained of a "total breakdown" in individuals' rights.

Pace said that, apart from prisoners set free by court-ordered amnesties in prisons run by the justice ministry, there were between 3,000 and 2,000 people being held in agencies right known facilities run by the Iraqi interior ministry.

But there were also others in unofficial facilities in Interior palaces "[them]" around Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq, as well as roughly 14,000 held in US military facilities like Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad and Camp Bucca in southern Iraq.

"All except those held by the Ministry of Justice are, technically speaking, held against the law because the Ministry of Justice is the only authority that is empowered by law to detain, to hold anybody in prison," Pace said.

"Most notably some of these people have suffered increase in privation and therefore we speak ... of a total breakdown in the provision of the individual in Irak country.

"It's very rare to get judges order[ing] you to be released and otherwise the police respecting that order.

"We have cases also where the judge who has ordered a group of people to be released, about 50-60 people, and the police, the interior ministry simply refuses," Pace said.

"We have another case in another part of the country where the judge was actually the subject of reprisal for having found people not guilty, or ordered, their release.

"The judge is now in jail," he said, without giving details.

The US-backed government, dominated by the long-suppressed Shiite majority, has launched an inquiry after 173 Iraqis last month found about 170 Iraqis were in a secret interior ministry bunker in Baghdad, some of whom showed signs of torture.

Pace said the justice ministry was also failing defendants.

"The judiciary has a lot to answer for in this country. It is really not carrying out its duties," he said, adding that bribes were sometimes paid for jobs in the judiciary and police.

"This is not denied," Pace said. "This is symptomatic of the corruption problems in this country and should in the way of any kind of rule of law." Reuters

UN considers military operation to bring order in Darfur

UNITED NATIONS—A 3,000? MILITARY FORCE will visit Darfur next week to study whether the United Nations should take over efforts to bring order to Sudan's broken west, UN officials and diplomats said on Monday.

Led by the African Union, the mission, from Dec. 10 to Dec. 20, will include experts from the United States, the European Union as well as the United Nations.

Under discussion is folding the African Union's existing Darfur peacekeeping operation into a UN-Sudan mission established last March to support a peace agreement between Khartoum and former rebels in the south of Sudan that ended two decades of war.

But it might take until September to deploy such an expanded mission, and it is uncertain whether the African Union would agree to wind up or combine its own operation into a UN-led force, the envoys said.

Sudan also would have to consent to non-African troops, which could number up to 10,000 and, like the African Union, would have to scramble to get enough soldiers for what one envoy called "a robust and mobile" force.

Almost 6,000 African Union troops and police are trying to stop escalating violence in Darfur, but those in charge say they lack the vehicles and communications equipment needed to operate effectively in the desert region the size of France. Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Bin Laden was in US

[illegible]—Young man Osama bin Laden may have visited the United States as a young man, long before declaring jihad against America and its allies, the New Yorker magazine reported Sunday. The wealthy, [illegible] scion [illegible] visited [illegible] in Monday, reported that according a longtime acquaintance from his native Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden made at least one trip to the United States, in about 1976, with his wife and eldest son, who remains medical treatment. The friend Khaled Batarfi, a Saudi journalist who lived close the street from Bin Laden in the 1970s, told the magazine that one aspect of bin trip that made a strong impression on the Laden was the serious alarm by airline passengers at his wife, an observant Muslim who wore [illegible] enveloping green and full-head coverings—often unfamiliar to many Americans at the time. AFP

Saddam guard in Australia

SYDNEY—One of Saddam Hussein's former bodyguards no longer dismisses after initially being refused a visa due to concerns he may have been involved in crimes against humanity, prompting criticism of the nation's immigration system. Prime Minister John Howard said on Monday that Odai Abbas Al Taki N arrived illegally in Israel in 1998 but was denied a visa by the immigration department in September 2000 after admitting to belonging to Saddam's republican security services. "The department did not want to give him a visa," Howard told parliament after the Sydney Morning Herald broke the news that Taki had been living in Australia for six years, Howard said. Taki, 30, had had the visa denial overturned by an appeals tribunal which found its had not held a position in Hussein's regime directly or indirectly involved in crimes against humanity. Taki joined a temporary protection visa in 2000. The Herald said Taki N was a member of Saddam's family, a major in his personal security force and also worked for Saddam's son Uday, tracking down dissidents. It said he was now married to an Australian doctor and living in the southern city of Adelaide. Howard said he would ask his immigration minister whether the government could take further action against Taki N. Reuters

Japan building safety mess

TOKYO—Japan's infrastructure ministry on Monday filed a criminal complaint with police against an architect who had faked quake-proof data in a widening scandal that has caused fears owners in the earthquake prone country. The ministry took the action amid growing public concern that many buildings may not withstand even moderate earthquakes. The construction ministry urged Tokyo police to press criminal charges against Hidetsugu Endou, a state-licensed architect who had falsified data in [illegible] condominiums. Endou, 48, was believed to have been involved in designing [illegible] buildings in 11 prefectures and he had fabricated quake-proof data on at least 10 of them so that they could not withstand even moderate tremors, infrastructure ministry officials said. The scandal has outraged the public in a land that accounts for about 20 percent of the world's earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater and where memories are vivid of the magnitude 7.3 tremor that killed more than 6,400 in the western city of Kobe in 1995. Reuters

INQUIRER

OPINION

A raisin in the sun

THAT'S THE TITLE OF A PLAY WRITTEN BY LORRAINE HANSBERRY, which later became a critically acclaimed movie starring Sydney Poitier. The plot is simple enough. Mallory Lee Younger (Poitier) is a chauffeur with big dreams. But depressing realities get in the way of his ambition. He seems permanently doomed to hard times in a small apartment with his wife, son, sister and mother. Then this "giant...surrounded by ants" suddenly has some good luck: his mother's $10,000 life insurance policy matures. Drama ensues as the family tries to decide what to do with the money.

EDITORIAL

Former President Fidel V. Ramos has always considered himself a "giant surrounded by ants," and like in Hansberry's play, his frustrated dream of a parliamentary government was rekindled by a windfall. In this case, his unexpected bank was the imminent collapse of the Arroyo presidency.

Ramos' proposal for Charter change, which had always been met with a wall of oblivious indifference on the part of the public, became a kind of win-win solution to the political crisis facing the country. Unlike the opposition, or even the administration, Ramos had a plan, which was detailed and, compared to other options, looked quite possible. It would enable President Macapagal-Arroyo to depart with some dignity and permit Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia to obtain a change in government tailored to their own specifications.

The Ramos lifeline did the most to reverse the flagging fortunes of the administration, and to this day remains the main game in town, allowing the Arroyo administration to stumble on until 2010. At the time, the Ramos solution was hailed by the ruling party Lakas-CMD and many others from both sides of the political aisle, the middle class, and even business. Even Mr. Arroyo praised it, and continues to pay it lip service.

However, there have been schemes, such as putting forward the name of Rep. Prospero Pichay for Speaker, and various other movements within the President's official family (such as the return of her husband and the upbeat mood of officials described with glee), that belie the resolutions publicly shown by the administration for the Ramos plan. And while the House of Representatives formally passed a resolution seeking the transformation of Congress into a constituent assembly the other day, the efforts of Ramos and De Venecia still have two roadblocks to hurdle. The first is the hostility of the Senate to amendment through a unicameral assembly. The second is public mistrust—and even hostility—to the Ramos solution.

Pulse Asia's October survey on "Most Beneficial and Most Influential Political Scenarios, and Best Person to Lead the Philippines at Present," showed that only 3 percent of Filipinos considered Ramos as the person who should lead the country. Given a margin of error of 3 percent, that number is range from zero to 6 percent, which didn't even put him in the league of Susan Roces. When the respondents were asked who should not lead the country, the ambiguity in Ramos was quite evident: 39 percent said he was not the person who should lead. The full significance of these figures should be measured against the 26 percent of the electorate who had voted Ramos into office and now seem to have disappointed. They no longer support him, and they seem to have joined the camp who intensely oppose him or, worse, simply don't consider him a good leader.

By offering Mr. Arroyo a lifeline, Ramos has in the process destroyed himself politically. He a man obsessed with his prestige not only at home but also abroad, how long will it be before an increasingly pliant administration decides it has nothing to lose by distancing itself from him? And how long will it be before foreign friends and admirers begin to discount the implications of his becoming so actively disliked by a portion of the population only marginally smaller than those who dislike Mr. Arroyo?

If life really imitates art, the impending epitaph to Fidel V. Ramos' long career seems to approximate not just the substance, but the title of the play. In the end, his political epitaph may have already been written: he gambled big, to win big, but instead ended up a footnote to the career of one of his successors, like the raisin in the sun: his reputation and legacy have shriveled, in the harsh light of public opinion.

Shuttered mindsets

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"IF YOU UNDUE US, DO WE NOT BLEED? IF YOU wrong us, do we not laugh?... And if you wrong us, do we not revenge?" —from "The Merchant of Venice"

Prejudice is enough but antiseptic weed, 40(%) minister finds fine, we assume. Bigotry infects somebody else: the Israelis clamping down on North African immigrants to *sweep the non-Jews* from Israel's streets, yelling against *schwarzes* in New Orleans's Kenner Hotel or Malay Muslims police shouting ethnic Chinese demonstrators to Kuala Lumpur.

But doesn't "an alarming picture of apparent discrimination against Muslims" here, Inquirer's Yeb Columnist wrote. The portrait emerged from 1,389 respondents interviewed in March 2005, the Philippine Human Development Report 2005 reveals. PHDR is sponsored by the UN Development Programme and Human Development Network.

Muslims were lashed out of this study opportunities, as the weather stalls. Filipino intellectuals working on PHDR were told. Ignored in public, many were pioneers with patronizing comments: "How come they're good ones, though Muslims." They're "unusually targeted" by police in their operations against drugs, terrorism and unsolved crimes.

Here are some interview excerpts. "My husband and I were waiting for a cab in Manila (Don't no one would stop," a Muslim woman recounted. "My husband told me to remove my veil. So, I took it off and we got a cab right away."

Agents selling Fourteen Subdivision lots in Cagayan de Oro locked out after learning that the Catholic buyer was married to a Muslim. Mustafa State University's research and extension chief described DU as "unwelcoming."

"A successful businessman, [who] owned *cosmetic* with expensive *retablos* in Manila," needs, it told interviewers, he is married to a Christian. To heal, a job. "So had to change his Muslim name—[Christianized] to Mark Anthony."

After working seven years in Saudi Arabia, the Muslim bellhop-to-be failed to get a job in General Santos City. "Put down your religion as Seventh Day Adventist [SDA]," a high school classmate advised him. "Your chances of employment will improve. SDA members don't eat pork. You wouldn't be forced to eat pork as company functions."

"When prejudice *metastasizes*, reason is silent," Fabrice Hazan wrote. Deeply concerned, the scientist ran a separate study "to measure the extent of anti-Muslim bias, if any, among Filipinos." Their conclusions form a PHDR appendix.

"A considerable percentage of Filipinos: (23 percent to 30 percent) are biased against Muslims," the report states. But majority reject stereotyping Muslims as people who oppose women.

Prejudice swells the ranks some. "And in [many] of their ranks by region, "Tausugs tend to have a more negative view of Muslims," the report found. Between 62 to 71 percent accepted negative typecasting, like their "being from poorer to *vas minus* and being terrorists or *warmongers*."

The roots of this bias go back to time. "Before the Spanish times, Muslims of Mindanao conquered the Visayas by means of piracy." In more recent times, majority of migrants to Mindanao, who displaced Muslims, sailed in from the Visayas.

Those from Luzon and the National Capital Region tend to have a less "negative view," the study adds. There are "cultural" exceptions. Residents of six enclave Metro Manila subdivision objected to the designation of a project next to Muslim hustlers in a mall. This would offend numerous, they claimed. It also lowered their property values.

Mindanaoans dismiss the notion that Muslims do not consider themselves Filipinos as look down on women. But "those from Mindanao are more likely to perceive Muslims as terrorists."

But those sheltered mindsets do not stem from personal knowledge. "Only about 14 percent have had direct dealings with Muslims." Their information mostly filtered in from friends and relatives in Mindanao and the Middle East.

"Those who have personal contact or contact with Muslims is limited," the study found. "Only 20 percent of Mindanaoans cited experience as source of information. The rest is hearsay."

The survey asserts the stereotypes "explains being and hearing decisions of Filipinos overall as well as the lack of basic information" to support procedures in passing projects links."

But the young bars are more women in challenging on Muslims than their elders. "Those aged 3-4 years or over tend to be more biased," while those aged 45 years or higher tend to be less biased."

"Bigotry aims to keep truth safe in its hand with a grip that kills it," Nobel Laureate Sir Sreshvanth Tagore once wrote. That's seen in "the blatant determination of most officials and, even, the common people to keep Muslims," PHDR points out. Those workers have "had have the right level of intolerance and anti-Muslim prejudice that was already through the psychosomatic Christian mainstream Philippine society"—and failure to address its root causes.

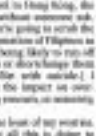
PHDR provides a calm analysis of our blindness. Unfolding shattered mindsets is a first step toward reaching out to each other for our minds are like paradoxes, someone said. "They only function when they're open."

Sen. Orly Mercado brothers said you," Pope John Paul II told Muslims in Davao during his first Philippine visit. "It grateful society to built on dialogue and I encourage its extension...And the whole world needs to see fraternal coexistence between Christians and Muslims in a modern, following and peaceful Philippines."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Winning

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

LIFE MICHELE PARCE. A COUPLE OF WEEKS ago, it was only a new joke. The reason Virgilio Garcillano was dredged up, the joke said, was that he was going to be made the main scorer for the Southeast Asian Games. His motto being "Number to be the last."

And I do said Jehuel. I better than you could say, Hello Carol," there was one less than Vice Prime Minister Tuanku Bintarawcia complaining of shooting in the Games. He would later say that he did not make any specific reference to the Philippines, he merely wanted to uphold sportsmanship. But when the right hand (Jehuel), the left hand (what's seen at the same time he said that, his spokesperson, who had a way of being more forthright than Ignacio Bunye, made his country's position known in this way: "From live television to slow motion replays, we can clearly tell there are serious problems with judging standards in some sports."

Philippine officials themselves have started everything is on the up and up...the judges are our Filipino players, they come from other countries. And local sports commentators have argued that their countrymen become like this used to do well, their athletes exceeding their selves because the home crowd is behind them. Whether that is enough to offset the country's slide in international sports—we've been skipping down the ladder over the years—is of course another question entirely. Indeed, just last year to help push SEAG, "retaining." the shooting to some fame.

Frankly, I don't know that we are cheating or not. What I do know is that we're on very shaky ground as far as credibility goes. Between the denial of Charlie Ong and GMA, it's not hard to see whom the world community will believe. And there's the very real and very hard risk

only an inexhaustible source of cost jokes.

Even ago, a suggestion like that would have sent angry Filipinos storming the Thai Embassy and demanding an apology posthaste from the King Bhumibol himself. Decades ago, we would have said that we or insert would do well to throw some respect for the country that might throw bone to garner votes in it.

I still remember the time when we used to complain bitterly about our athletes being cheated by other countries. I remember in particular when I was a kid that the crowd at the movie house where a boxing bout between Flash Elorde and a Japanese opponent was about to start, the announcer for the bout declared in the judging. Much to the chagrin of the motherhood-certain who saw his claim being smiled and punctuated by angry flare. Those years are gone, and the longer we live the less, or a little evidence points at home, in more probably forever.

We've learned to factor in cheating in our lives. So, more than that, we've learned to take it in the sit on breathe. I remember again GMA's advice to media to dwell on winners rather than losers in a commercial hearing in I said, in light of the fact that they have been covering her. But it's a horrible example of winning she's advancing, by example more than anything else. One of the most magnificent acts for the Olympics last year that I saw was of an athlete in a long distance race who stumbled and fell close to the finish line. Then while the rest of the pack rushed past him, he slowly drew himself up and, winning to pain, hobbled all the way to the finish line. The crowd stood up and applauded. That was the Olympic spirit. It applauded. That was cheating.

I suppose, in matters of earth and heaven, of sports and politics, of body and soul, the principle is the same: People relax try desperately to win, particularly to at all costs, end up losing everything.

Only of course our No. 1 in the Consider country but has ended up last to the public sodomizing. If we don't watch out, as could see, to closer Games.

Ensure SEA Games win wasn't 'tsamba'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE NATION IS ONE BOILERPLATE OVER THE spectacular obscuring of our athletes at the recently concluded SEA Games. The acrimonious mud-by-palms that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra threw during his farewell remarks at the closing ceremonies of the 23rd country's two neutral events did not stick. Only politicians like the Philippine Olympic Committee (Coojesa) or the sports veterans rabble dignitaries followed the games assiduously on TV, measuring the golds in the very real, Gradolitos, and incredible superiority manifested by the people spurred Team Philippines to overdo itself. After a Christmas treat for the nation: President Macapagal-Arroyo should host a sumptuous dinner for all the athletes and sports officials, as well as their coaches and trainers, at Malacañang. Not to those Tehrani and PLDT chief boy their support. Kudos specially to Viet Gentleman Mike Arroyo who mobilized the big businessmen's support. Congratulations to the Philippine Sports Commission for its excellent leadership in Cebu.

The incredible drawing of Team Philippines should spur from lawyer-after Cebu based rubber-tan Cordelinda Flores calls the "culture of merit, hence" embodied by the Games. We should begin applying the principle to the rest of the nation's life. Thailand so that we can dispense that our marvelous talents was just a humorous flake or tsamba, but how to work hard and we should also stop being among the biggest bottle against poverty, which is tougher.

* * *

Would Virgilio Garcillano's testimony in the Hello Garci scandal? Already the opposition is using the testimony to wreak it, and the observation has been made that to some quarters, the only credible testimony he can give is that Ellen and he conspired to cheat in the last elections. Garci, however, fiddle-faddled on, and it was only when he paraphrased an oft-quoted passage about faith, "believing is subjective, for those who believe, no explanation is necessary; for those who do not, no explanation is possible," Ted's been fairly out.

* * *

Today Japanese Amb. and Mrs. Ryuhitaro Yamazaki will host a reception to celebrate the birth day of Emperor Akihito. It's a good time to say that, as Yamazaki pointed out, next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan. This happened a decade after the war because the two countries ended 40 years ago last September, with the surrender of General Yamashita in Kiangan, Ifugao. On that same day, Japanese are of appreciation to Nisa also came to an end in Tokyo with the signing of the documents of unconditional surrender, which the old Emperor Hirohito (father of the present Emperor) was instrumental in obtaining, through General Douglas MacArthur, his declared July 25, 2000 at 8:00 p.m.

Yamazaki pointed out that since that day 60 years ago, Japan has recognized that its military aggression caused "unbearable damage and suffering" to many peoples in Asia, including the Philippines, for which its prime ministers have expressed "deep remorse and heartfelt apology." Since then, he said, Japan has made an unwavering commitment to strengthen its friendship with the Philippines, and has been a reliable partner and prime donor of official development assistance funds to projects identified in the administration's 10-Point Agenda. Mabuhay, Sanpete Shibito.

* * *

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, reserved to an item here wherein I said there was no need for a public interview of the three justices nominated by the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) for chief justice, I said such interview, which would have been president-setting, was not necessary as it must be assumed that when the justices reach that pinnacle in their career they must be worthy of the highest post. Moreover, their thinking and position on various issues can be determined from their pronouncements as well as their concurring or dissenting opinions. Admitting that he was the proponent of this amendment to the rules, Pangilinan stressed that it was made necessary by incidents that the JBC lacks transparency in its proceedings, and thus the need "to open the process." He said since the JBC had agreed to this amendment and announced their date and time of the interviews in newspapers, a complete turnabout "would not be good for the JBC as an institution as it would reinforce existing perceptions that it is not an independent body."

The senator would be reminded that the JBC will be perceived as independent if it's truly independent, and no one can do that for the JBC but its members. At any rate, the issue has become moot and academic since the four ladyjustices have asked that their names be withdrawn from the list, leaving the JBC with the required three names to submit to the President.

* * *

The President has proclaimed the week of Nov. 30 to Dec. 7 as "National Week of Prayer, Penance and Healing for Our Nation." There is a lot to thank for this week, among them our victories in the SEA Games and the fact that there have been no episodes of violence as well as the strengthening of the peso. GMA's EO came in the wake of the proclamation of Sept. 12 as a "National Day of Prayer, Conversion, Reparation and Consecration for our country," and that of Nov. 1 as "observance and celebration of God's Fire, in oneness with our Muslim brothers and sisters. The National Week of Prayer, Penance and Fasting closes on Thursday Dec. 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, with a Marian rosario in Manila ing followed by a procession of the Manila devotees to the CCP complex on Roxas Boulevard. From the CCP, we proceed to Rizal Park for a Holy Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church, where a Mass is celebrated at 5 p.m., after which will take place the consecration to God the Father and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The President has been invited to the closing rites.

Gender sensitivity in movies

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN THE AWARD FOR THE "MOST GENDER-Sensitive Film" among the entries to the Metro Manila Film Festival of 2005 was announced, on every hand there was audible expressions of disgust or ill. Some wondered exactly what a "gender-sensitive" movie was, others expressed doubts that any commercial film would even qualify as such, and a number of those who had chosen behind the award, the cinema for choosing the winners, and the mission of imposing "political correctness" on an entertainment activity.

But the winners in 2005, "Homecoming," as well as the top grosser, "Ashley Gozon: Dial 2," proved the critics and skeptics wrong. The two films are proof that it is possible to combine commercial appeal with social message with no holds-barred, as well as a serious effort to examine gender issues in depth.

"Homecoming" tells the story of a female OFW who comes home only to discover that the last born, conceived with the OFW's help, resulting in her being traumatized by both her family and community. The movie examines not just the ignorance and stigma surrounding the discovery of a rape-committable disease (which could also apply to HIV/AIDS), but also the role that the media plays in creating and then sensationalizing this story to turn the women to home problems their fortunes abroad.

"Ashley Gozon: Dial 2" has the big star Judy Ann Santos for its female lead, portraying an ordinary housewife who becomes a celebrity overnight when a broadcaster her husband's death. But when instead of the "Gender Sensitive" award for the movie was the character finished out by Jennie Gil, a cross-dressing comedian who wins the love and hills in love with a Japanese officer.

* * *

"I felt very proud of our film," Santos said during the launching of this year's "Most Gender-Sensitive Film" award. "It's a movie we can be proud of here and abroad and allowed all of us to explore roles that go beyond the usual."

Explaining her decision to veer away from her screen, suffering persona in previous movies and TV soaps, Santos said it was part of her desire to "mature as an actor, to grow, and to establish my

'Intay lagipen'

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ruthie L. Burgos

stylized sizes. The Philippine landscape has in more ways than one lost its distinct honorable qualities, and the "Filipino" in the Filipino people has also allowed for the conversion to hollow, black consciousness. This is not necessarily a bad thing, what I thought was not was the fact that I didn't see any Filipino characters, indigenous, unforgettable either and I have any flags or colors. Now that surprised me until I remembered that the homeboys and producers.

Still the evening city was incredibly a-middle with class, so praise the Lord for the lack of blood in pollution.

Upon arrival, we proceeded to the Cenakulo Library beside the church where I was introduced to and fellowship and the famous huge orange Encantadas appeared and I re-learned that I am a conspiracy against my diving; it wasn't like I hadn't had breakfast and lunch before that. One of the wonders you learn easy by one of these days to see is a stuffed cash, fully a dozen long and as long as a newer model car, plus a lot of tomatoes, guns and snakes you marvel at when our flora and fauna have been here. The newer was only modestly proud of the composers available for the projects and lessons of the public school children. Angeles City is the first town that you viewed before visiting the different ends of the plains. The girl's third theme of the fair, "Intay lagipen" just as fascinated I was, of course, close to my heart.

A primary rule to remember when you are a guest in the province is never consider the minute

stone "Ellen" wasn't a just part of the effort to promote greater literacy in the media, to advance the representation of the "realities of the times and issues of men and women in Philippine society, as well as to "transform the images of women" in the media.

There have been suggestions, Pelaia added, to expand the coverage of the award to other media with broader reach, such as television. But efforts to also working with QC officialdom to increase the cash incentive, at present set at P50,000 which is less a reasonable portion of the production budget of most movies.

Still, I doubt if even cheaper enterprise would be enough incentive for mainstream to risk their money on a film with a social message. It will also be a matter of a lot of actors wanting to work with their image, creative folk with a social conscience, and producers willing to win the studios, and of course an audience open to new challenges, to bring out this balance to full intensity.

* * *

"ASIAWEEK" fans and devotees of the Steven Soderbergh, Wong Kar-wai and Quentin Tarantino-type movies by C.E. Lewis, are invited to take part in "Inside the Studio," a "celebration of all things Filipino cinema" on Dec. 10, 11 and 12 at the Philippine Center of Narration and Fully Booked, the entertainment lifestyle center for intellectuals—Dec. 10 and 11—at the Fully Booked outlet at the Power Plant mall.

On Dec. 10, a series of lectures will provide historical and cultural backgrounds, interpretations and critical reviews of "The Chronicles of Narnia," among the sponsors are Intel Philippines, Philippine Airlines and Fully Booked. Dante Lauder on "The Significance of C.E. Lewis' Stories for Today's Filipinos," Lorena Barros-Cruz on "Visions of Narnia," and Alberto Modena on "Costume-making."

Activities for the week after, on Dec. 17, are geared toward the whole family, with storytelling, games, and art, crafts and Bible-tutorials open to all Narnia fans. A question-and-answer session with the cast of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" will cap the day.

My shoe box

MY MOTHER AND I HAD AN ARGUMENT RECENTLY OVER seemingly insignificant shoe box.

It occurred one weekend as she was getting rid of the shoes she had accumulated in our store room. I was busy fixing my closet that had messed me to be a total disaster for me. Guess she had taken it as me pawning back my clothes after picking what I would wear on a particular day. Weekends are the store-

YOUNG BLOOD

Sharon Michelle L. Beltejar

We want to know what the young ones think about. What can they share? What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the teens (considering and below)—Ed.

* * *

lying by an interstate border one week ago. The post-dating must have been coming why it ended up in that miserable place.

I rushed to my mother to ask her if she had any idea how precious that shoe box was to me. She said she didn't know.

That shoe box has been with me since I was 12 years old. When I first got hold of it, I had no idea that I would be keeping it for so many long years.

But then I didn't know that I would develop an obsession with letters. I remember that when we were in 6th grade, my best friend and I never each other letters even though we saw each other every single class day. Every other day we would drop by our school's mail service to retrieve the letters we had written to each other. What silly sixth graders we were!

As the letters started piling up on my study table, I wondered where I would keep them. Where I saw the shoe box in my mother's drawer, I knew I had found the answer.

The shoe box has been my personal treasure trove and memories of my past. It used to hold only my treasury of letters from friends and even here, but as I grew older, I began to stock up on mementoes that would remind me of days gone by.

The shoe box is, in fact, my Pandora's box. Unlocking it may not exactly result in unimaginable loss; it will unleash a whole lot of memories—joy and sadness, hope and despair and frustration, to name a few. Going through the contents of that box never fails to bring a smile to my face on most occasions. But there are times when it brings tears to my eyes. Every item in it has a story to tell.

There's that dried rose petal that a high school "friend" gave to me on Valentine's Day. I had actually stapled it between the pages of Voltaire's "Candide" because I wanted to keep that about it. But several years later as I was doing some research, I found it lying flat on the bottom pages of the book. I gave it a new home: the shoe box.

Another item in that box is a heart-shaped bookmark from the first guy to tell me that I was the most beautiful woman on the face of the earth. Ok, what silly fans between 12 and 13 years old don't believe in love? I even wrote back to me and ask me one while I was crying in Manila a novel by some Russian writer.

I have no idea where he is now. Something tells me he's married, for is he?

One item that kept me giggling for hours was from a friend who was undoubtedly smitten by her fellowship participant. He was one cute guy that we've ever seen. She doodled hearts of various sizes on her notes, while Professor X superadded it Kindergarten and Hereafter. She eventually professed her love for him on one of her test papers. Nothing happened though. And now, she's happily married to her high school sweetheart.

I still have with me my first jury speech which I received after I delivered it in front of 500 users of financial independence. It means that no longer would I depend on my parents' benevolence. I felt like I had finally become a full-fledged, functioning and productive mammal. The event as I began earning my own keep, I knew it didn't give me a license to splurge on everything I want. There are hard times ahead, so I learned to save for the rainy days.

Photos are also a lot of space in the box. Unlike those that I keep in albums, these photos were sent or given to me by people who were once part of my life. Beside who haven't been to the Philippines for the past 10 years, acquaintances who have come and gone, and for me I never who defined what love was to me back then.

I love photos, old and new. They tell a thousand stories. It's like reading pages from a book. The people on the many pages may not be universal heroes, but their photos immediately summon old memories.

Think be told, my shoe box is one of the things I can't live without. I could survive without the modern-day curse, internet such as a mobile phone, a laptop, a PDA, an iPod, but not without my shoebox. Call me a sentimental fool if you want, but I know I can hardly keep me in touch with my past and serve as a reminder of what I was and how I used to be. And it always feels good to look back at these treasures. After all, these are what make us who we are today.

When I confronted her about the shoe box, my mother was unmoved. And she couldn't say anything as I erected a whole litany of reasons why that shoe box matters a lot to me.

Of course, it was a mistake to have kept it in my store room. But I did it because there was no more space left in my cabinet. Now I keep it under my bed. I am planning to purchase a transparent box that will become my shoe box's new home. And hopefully that's where it will stay forever—just with the my words, along with the memories that each item brings.

* * *

Sharon Michelle L. Beltejar, 20, is a freelance writer who is also the College of Agriculture.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the profession/s holding and the company you work with. Contributions or thoughts/ideas should not have been previously published.

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Send back Garci to the 'never-never'

THE PESO WAS GAINING STRENGTH, the BSP was growing its dollar reserves, and the economists claimed that soaring freighter rates to be the delight of businessmen, making us believe that the worst was over and that our politicians had finally buckled down to some serious work for the sake of the country.

Then, all of a sudden, former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano pops up on the second-stage front yesterday.

Now we have Garci back from never-never land and, frankly, we do not know what it is to clean his name, why we back then?

Already, more businessmen have an ill feeling of the uncertain presence and are being lulled by the suspicions in a crisis where things are going back to something better than normal for everyone. Are we going to have another season of political furore and uncertainty? How long will this one last? Are we going to have the economic pain all back to square nowhere once again?

Are we going to be glued to our TV sets once more to watch the drama unfold to see we going to roll our sleeves and confront or the devil or hell? Tomorrow never ... and ... enough" ... enough!" I believe we should not give any significance to Garci's return, his name, his loudness, or whatever unbecoming his return. He (who should never be glorified or given importance by the media because we all know where all this would lead back.

Let us all continue with our optimistic outlook. And let us not destroy the gains we are beginning to enjoy just because of the return of this individual. The encouraging turnaround in our economy will benefit millions of people, and this here is far more gratifying than "gratifying" for politics.

"Hello Garci?" How you go back to the "never-never"?

—DANIEL BERNARDO,
Director Secretariat Filipino Chamber of Commerce (QLD) Inc for Brisbane, Australia, PO Box 2307 Toowong Business Centre, QLD

A WORKER cleans up the Laoma before the crowds arrive.

Apostolate through journalism

I AM A RESIDENT OF ARNEDO CITY who usually travels to Cebu every year on All Saints' Day to pay homage to my late parents and relatives. This year, while in Cebu, I attended the Sunday Mass at the Redemptorist Church downtown. The officiating priest, a Filipino with a foreign accent, seemed his forte was by saying that we wanted to read a column of Belinda Olivares-Cannons dated Oct. 30, 2005, in the Inquirer, about the "touch" of what really happened in the rally in Mendiola, which was dispersed with water cannons. Cannons's column said that the rally was peaceful at first and that there were no Subicon provocateurs in Mendiola; she said the rally proper drew out Po. Bulmer Basco. Her interviews behind news reports claiming that seven bishops were among those "water-cannoned" by the police. Interestingly, the bishops remained silent about this, nobody's names in the truth.

The Redemptorist priest is the Cebu Mass used Cannons as a "proof Christian who was not afraid to tell the truth and become a Church "moderator" whom he said we also capable of saying. He called his homily to the packed crowd of church goers by stating that we should emulate the good example of the Inquirer columnist who is not afraid to stand up for the truth, for the enlightenment of all.

I'd like to congratulate Cannons for doing an apostolate through her profession.

—VICKY BRAIS,
Angeles City, Pampanga

Superfluous billboard

I GREW UP SPENDING EARLY MORNING walks with my grandmother on the grounds of Rizal Park. In the process, I got to know and reverentially seek an answer to the question "Why should one person deserve to have a huge park named after him?"

To this day, I can't help but feel proud every time I pass by that person's monument and when it stands for. For me, Rizal is not just "important" in that park, and that a few kind. Just as a soldier has to sacrifice in his (the other people are trying to grab the limelight from him.

I refer to the billboard placed quite near the Rizal Monument announcing the Rizal Park Rehabilitation Project, with the President and tourism secretary cleaning its environs. My salary compels me to disagree. So if there's any fine that needs to be done, a should be mine.

The is to spend a some anywhere in the country, further crowding the environment of other individuals to no political leaders. My others are billboards that chunk a certain money or congressman's portrait 300 times (read first and sole of color read.

This practice has to stop. What we want to see is the proper accounting in these government resources are being used. Tell us through these billboard how much is the cost of a project, where doing the work, and when it is set to be completed. And for goodness' sake, think the people for the are they paid, which made the project possible.

Please take down that billboard in Luneta, or I will assemble a group from the PNU-QLB factory and get them to throw "Fargo" in dirty sins in the billboard.

—FRANCISCO LITTLE DUMOLOG,
SOLEIL Building,
16 Esther Lynaria Ave.,
Quezon City

Apostolate through journalism

THIS REFERS TO RAMON TULFO'S line. 3 column on the Philippines being a nation of clients. While I agree in general with his observations, I take exception to his statements that most heads (both of State, modern as shown. I wonder how he got this totally wrong information.

I'm an overseas Filipino worker who has been working in Riyadh for more than 20 years now. Filipinos are one of the most empowered and professional expatriates by foreign and locally companies in the Middle East, including throughout the Middle East. In fact, while Arab countries have poured large outsourcing most jobs, the number of Filipinos they have continues to increase. I have not yet met or heard an Saudi going out the impression that he or she thinks of us as "slaves." Actually, a big number of Filipinos occupy executive managerial positions in banks and other big institutions where their capability and honesty are recognized. There may be isolated cases of mistreating in gulf countries, as in any country, but they are exceptions. Besides, it is not just Filipinos but also other nationalities who commit this crime.

Most Saudis know the difference between the Philippine government and the Filipinos they employ, while the former may be composed of thieves, they latter are capable, honest citizens who work hard for the sake of their loved ones back home.

—JOSEPH S. NICDAO,
PO. Box 22519,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Around the corner

I NOTICE THAT FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada is working more and more lesser to the Lottery outlets and the lotto commercials exhibiting them. Welcome to the "club" Mr. President.

I notice that there are still many "vacant" lottery outlets in use. Some examples are "Lucyna," "Gonzales," "Sherell," "Estrada," "Alonzo," etc. Whatever happened to poker traffic (whenever view to participate there)?

I notice that radio stations in Eleven Manila do not give our audience time. I hope the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas can do something about it?

I wonder if the many consumer products (like shampoos, condiments, coffee, coffee cream, chocolate powder, cheese spread, etc. come in cashes from. It does a sign that the purchasing power of our people has down to zero?

I notice that the 25th anniversary of the Bayanan is just around the corner. Happy anniversary!

—PAUL B. ROBLES,
BELA Court, Mahusday, Marikina City

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Global effort to combat bird flu must include Taiwan government

THE PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) issued national bulletin # 58 given scientific fact there main source. First, the previous deaths of the avian pathogen are directly connected to avian birds to humans. Second, as humans, WHO has a 10 percent fatality rate. And third, it is not unlikely that the virus will acquire a human gene, making it unmistakable from one human to another, thereby multiplying the threat to human lives exponentially.

Dr. David Nabarro, the UN coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza, estimates that the human casualty from the H5N1 pandemic could range between 5 million to 150 million, although the World Health Organization has a rather conservative figure of 7.4 million in the near.

WHO Director General, Dr. Lee Jong-wook, has warned that "we are facing a challenge which is potentially much bigger than SARS," adding that "we cannot afford any gap in our global surveillance and response system for this virus, which chooses a time when the is a unannounced dance.

By now, the world should have driven hard lessons from the SARS outbreak in 2003 which claimed 800 humans lives because of the lack of cooperation among nations.

We are concerned that Taiwan's loss, due to the middle of borderless and southern data makes is gravely susceptible to the bird flu. This means that a pandemic that strikes Taiwan will have a devastating effect on the region's economy as a whole. Taiwan is one of the most important transportation hubs in the region. A huge number of people and volume of cargo pass through or are landed on its ports. It is also an important transit point for engineering skills, the annual resources to afford flu.

But we believe the threat can be contained by international cooperation. We therefore ask for the support of the Philippine people in our quest to be included full and formal partner in global disease prevention and control mechanisms.

Taiwan's risk reduction can serve as an invaluable asset in the prevention of the global village. We have the ability to produce a generic version of Tamiflu, and our geographic location can serve as a platform for responding rapidly to the outbreak of a pandemic.

The people of Taiwan, including the 400,000 foreign nationals residing on the island, should have the same rights as all human beings to protect, complete and maximize access to the WHO system. This is consistent with the principle of "universal participation," which lies in the core of WHO's mandate to advance the health of all peoples. By ignoring the inherent rights of the people of Taiwan to full access to the WHO system, the world is basically shooting out an integral component of the world's health chain.

—ROBERT G.L. SHIH,
Director, Press Division,
Taipei Economic and Cultural Office

Thaksin out of tune

AS A FILIPINO LIVING HERE IN THE United States and closely monitoring the events of the 21st Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines, I felt proud of the excellent performance of our SEA-sweep Philippine contingent. I was therefore deeply offended when Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra accused the Philippines of cheating. His accusations were full of malice.

Our contingent was really prepared and ready to take head-on the region's sporting powerhouses. Thaksin should have directed his frustrations at his country's contingent.

We did not question earlier the flames, rumors when other countries captured the overall championship during their respective hosting of the event, as host we celebrated with almost-orchestrated glee. This was the true meaning of sportsmanship, this should have been clear to Thaksin.

Congratulations to the Philippine contingent.

—JOHN GLENN S. CAGOD,
43-31 11 Hunterdon Place,
Plainsboro, Harrold 1534,
glennscagod@yahoo.com

InqBlitz

Garci's back! Your message to Garci?

Both signed to sorry!
—**Kirby Del Rosario, 22,** clerk-city

"Mas garci, tell na ng sa original ito, isang pathetic, may Bertha-clan...
—**Roy Mesajay, 38,** Digos

Garci, somewhat have an additional any losing testimonies saying mabubuti ka ang kapwa.
—**rose ortiga, 53,** ill

ha, ha...bobong garci, nakakaawa, nahuli mo ang sarili mo ... pati kay ate glam...
—**jhanis,** 30

Hello garci! Balasen yourself by talking the truth.
—**marco bermudo,** Baguio City

Mr Garci, wag muling bubuhay si Jun Pastor. Ikaw pinagkakaisahan si Senya, Ang Tatay at Nathi. Wag na kayong kapatawan...
—**Rizzy Pampalam, 28,** Digos City

Why can't a liar to learn & learn like make convergence etc. kumbaga mas nakakatuwa ka pa kung ikaw ang kausap...
—**noel c. empedrado, 34,** engineer-davao city

Garci, thanks a...or basta anothing a well ink do GMA is save me from my family. GARCI, honesty is best policy.
—**Alvenard de los Santos, 18,** Bacolod City

Like ga! Is bek.
—**Ruby Jane Ortega,** homemaker-City

hello garci...ehmm is it so hard to tell the truth be honest and it will set you free...
—**dante Salvador, 32,** cebu

I hope u have plan if u need a hardship i think i have a solution for you. I suggest u do a video confession with of what really happened last election...
—**armond Bernabe, 40,** Batangas city

ha ha HAHA mag palambot ka na lagi.....TAG IYAK KA SAKIN LAGOT U HEHE...Bastillero a.ga!

—**larissa peñaloza, 44,** qc

Philippines are not stupid, so stop lying it just tell the truth that you & your fiancé cheated during the elections.
—**arnold morales, 34,** mangaldan, cpo. pandi

Garci was an embodiment of evil man. Her name can be compared to Satan's lying homosexuality in the bible.
—**Rico Bolasa, 29,** Baguio

GARCI BALIK! Our KEY chino TRAP it about! WE REALLY HAPPENED! HAHAHA...GARCI SUBTERR. If she runs RECLING of it ELECTION OR HOME
—**Nanette del mundo, 29,** government

Garci tell the truth. Isang araw ng gising ang amin ay responsible ka sa mala-impyerno nitong kalagayan.
—**Hong cascada, 35,** domestic city

Garci a new life by being free in public & forsaken having redemption of oneself in prison. It's better than leading an hell of youself to hell.
—**Kenlo Bejilla, 20,** manufacturing

2 GARCI. The TRUTH SHALL SET U FREE. Please have a CONFESSION!!! HOPEFULLY this HAPPEN!
—**Fonn-le del mundo, 29,** government

Garci need explain for the cohort & remain of a need public servant by something that truth matter! Big confidently.
—**Ruel Angeles, 28,** Caloocan City

US Marines accused of rape

of course. Sino dito sa inyo hindot as ang sarap ng hot nurses pa nasa...ed. Save to sort inquiry.
—**ronald morales, 29,** mangaldan, davao

ang sinasabi nyang ito na totoo, ibig bang sabihin nito ay ok lang sa kanya na ang mga sundalong kano ay gumahasa sa mga babaeng pilipina?
—**jun de castro, 45,** domestic city

Iraq dont matter to it pits. So the citizens are down here. Be deeply it begin...let us not make this wrong. sarri sarri.
—**kenlyn sebastian, 17,** sales

Garci ang sabi mo ay sorry na? Sa Jun Pastor. Sa mga hayop ni Senya, sa tatay ni Lito. Pamilya ko eh... sa Pahayahay dami nyong pinerwisyo.
—**ramon, 33,** davao

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Opinion

Ay tol ni G, wag na kayo last Jun Tinlan Sa tol lugo ko Sanay, as tang ay last. Tonka ka sir... ka Pahayahay dami nyong personal ka...
—**ramon, 33,** davao

Across the NATION

Bataan woman militant leader slain

BALANGA CITY—A 46-YEAR-OLD WOMAN ACtivist was gunned down by two motorcycle-riding men on Monday after she attended a meeting with farm and fishery leaders in a resort in Abucay town in Bataan.

Cathy Abuyuan, secretary general of the Alyansa para sa Pagbabayong Bondabayan (APB) in Bataan, had just left the countryside resort in Abucay where 27 leaders of fishermen and farmers in Luzon were holding a conference, when she was shot, according to Pablo Pondoc, national chair of the Pagmalasakit Alyansa ng Mangingisda sa Pilipinas (Pangisda).

Abuyuan, who had been an activist since the protests against the Bataan nuclear plant and the American bases in the mid-1980s, died of four bullet wounds.

She was a native of Candelaria, Zambales, but raised her family in Barangay Sta. Lucia in Abucay town. Her husband is also active in groups in the APB in Bataan.

APB is the mother organization of Alyansa ng Mangingisda sa Bataan Labor Association Committee (Lito Ruiz) and the Alyansa ng Magsasaka sa Bataan (Almabat), two activist groups in Bataan.

Pondoc condemned the assailants, saying this indicated that those behind the series of extrajudicial killings had started targeting other political organizations.

Since September this year, 24 Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Bayan Muna leaders and members in Central Luzon have been killed.

Pondoc said they suspected the military to be involved in Abuyuan's killing.

A report from the police in Camp Tinio in Balanga City said the Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army are behind Abuyuan's killing.

The report said the killing was part of the "feud" between the CPP-NPA and the breakaway group, Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB). The RPD, the police said, was aligned with the RHB.

Participants in the Abucay meeting were activists belonging to legitimate organizations like the Pangisda and the Pambansang Kilusan ng Pakikipagisda Magbubukid, Pondoc said.

They were taken to the police station for questioning but were released after two hours on the intervention of lawyers from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. Police said there were no grounds for detaining them or bringing them to the Abucay municipal hall.

None of the conference's participants witnessed the killing, Pondoc said.

In Baguio City the Cordillera People Democratic Front (CPDF), the regional arm of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), condemned the killing of militant activists such as Joe Manongdo and other leftists.

Last week, Manongdo, a church worker of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, was gunned down in Barrio San while Bonifacio, former member of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, was killed in Bangued, Abra. Bonifacio was also a Bayan Muna leader.

Tonette Orejas and Jerry Esplanada, PDI; Cathy Rafael with a report from Dimitar Gilbaw, PDI N. Lucas Barrato and Andrew Asuncion, PDI C. Laurel Dinh

ETHNIC PARADE
The Baguio tourism industry gives itself a pat on the back with this parade of cultures last Monday, as more residents than visitors have rolled around the city. Last Christmas, a hotel with meetings rooms would not have left.

Another meningo victim dies in General Santos

GENERAL SANTOS—A 40-YEAR-old man died from meningococcemia while being treated at the General Santos City Hospital (GSCH) on Tuesday.

Dr. Health Officer Francisco Duque III appealed to residents here not to panic even if the disease had already claimed the lives of two people in the province in the past two weeks.

Duque said the two meningo cases in the province could not yet be considered an outbreak.

Aside from being curable, he said, meningococcemia could only be transmitted through direct contact or exposure with an infected person.

He ordered local health authorities to immediately quarantine the area where the fatal meningo victim lived and to administer prophylactic treatment on all those who came in contact with him.

Alabel municipal health officer Dr. Hedeonico Reloj said inspections they already visited the place to investigate and to give medications to all residents who were exposed to the victim.

GSCH chief Dr. Lakme Gilmore said the latest victim manifested symptoms one of the first meningo victims, a resident of Malapatan town.

Gilmore said it was already too late when the latest victim was brought to the hospital for treatment. He said they learned that he was already suffering from high fever as early as Monday last week. Agustin Rivera, PDI Mindanao desk

Closure of Cotabato airport for repairs opposed

COTABATO CITY—THE PLANNED CLOSURE OF the Cotabato airport in Barangay Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao due to its dilapidated runway has stirred apprehension among Central Mindanao residents, particularly the business sector.

"Not only will it affect my commuters but other passengers of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat," said Sinsuat Mayor Jun Mamalinta.

Sinsuat was reacting to a proposal raised by key officials of the Philippine Airlines and the Air Transportation Office (ATO).

ATO Cotabato Manager Jun Manaros, who recommended the repair and rehabilitation of the runway, said the project has been pre-selected due to technical problems.

The problem, according to Manaros, stemmed from a Mindanao-Sonsonate Development Council letter to the Department of Transportation and Communication saying that any move to implement the P23-million project at the Cotabato Airport should have its approval.

Since then, the 2005 repair work has been put on hold, Sinsuat said.

Capt. Reuben Stilberg, PAL vice president for safety concerns, said the sad state of the Cotabato runway poses danger to aircraft as exposed pebbles (rattrock) all over it may enter plane engines and cause them to overheat and burn into flames.

Stilberg said the market cost of P3.5 million per aircraft may be costly if that is an explosion.

"We are concerned ... first and foremost about the safety of passengers and crews," he said.

Manaros said the elements of nature such as rain, wind and solar heat, have contributed to the gradual dilapidation of the asphalt runway.

The condition has been aggravated by heavy aircraft that use the facility, he said.

Unless repaired soon, PAL management would recommend the immediate suspension of its Cotabato flights.

Stilberg, however, suggested a coordinated effort of DILG, ATO and DOTC in enacting the runway of pebbles, sand and other debris. He said while the proposed multimillion-peso rehabilitation work has yet to be carried out.

Cotabato traders and others, whose shipments of merchandise and goods depend on air transport, would be affected by the planned flight suspension of PAL, said Atty. Tim Abing, president of the Cotabato Grocers Association.

Abing's anxiety was shared by Pete Marquez, president of the Metro Cotabato Chamber of Commerce and Industry who said the airport was chosen as the lay the arrival of newspapers, magazines and other reading materials from Manila. *Charlie Delano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Group slams NPA attacks on cell sites

LUCENA CITY—A GROUP CALLING ON GOVernment soldiers and Non People's Army guerrillas to spare civilians in their war criticized the communist rebels for continuing to target telecommunications facilities.

"Civilian infrastructure are not legitimate military targets, especially if there are not being used for military purposes," said a group calling itself Samahang Ayaw Sa Digmaan (Association Against War) in a statement.

The group said that it considered attacks on cell sites as a violation of the CARHRIHL.

The developed in some 30 NPA rebels attacked the Smart Pinoy Cellular Satellite Station in Barangay Palanog Carmelig, Albay at about 11:45 a.m., Friday. Lilibeg, one of the rebels who took part in the attack was killed by a grenade lobbed by the rebels.

Maj. Ramon Rolando Rosario, 2d Civil Relations Unit commander based in Camp General Simeon Ola, Legazpi City, identified the casualty as Henry Gubat, who witnesses said used his body to cover the grenade to save the lives of others in the area.

Rosario said Gubat was a member of the 12th Division Auxiliary Army Company manning the detachment, which repulsed the rebels after a 15-minute gunfight.

The communist guerrillas withdrew to the direction of nearby Libmpa town, which is adjacent to Legazpi City, where elements of the 903d Infantry Battalion of 901st Infantry Brigade were sent to track them.

"We ask the NPA to stop this practice by whatever purpose it serves them," Samag LAYAW II said.

Samag CARHRIHL, also called Kasapulong Pamatay-tawgo sa Kalibutan, is a network organization that calls on the Philippine government and the communist-led National Democratic Front to adhere to the provisions of the agreement.

Based on newspaper reports, the NPA has made 19 or 20 attacks on Globe cell sites, many of them admitted by NPA spokespersons in the area.

No cases of NPA attacks on Globe cell sites were happened in Catanduanes, Quezon last week.

The military said the NPA conducts sabotage operations against business companies that refuse to pay the so-called revolutionary taxes.

The rebels' group also found an alarming the increasing death toll of both combatants and civilians in the ongoing fighting between government soldiers and communist guerrillas. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

CHINESE HOMEBOY! An illegal immigrant from China wears a Filipino costume as he peddles stuffed toys while walking on the sidewalk in front of a shopping mall in downtown Baguio City. The vendor, who was arrested by police, is one of the many Chinese nationals who have been seen selling their wares in the streets of Baguio and other parts of the country. The Bureau of Immigration has vowed to crack down on illegal Chinese immigrants who are taking away jobs from Filipinos. *Photo by Jonathan Cellona*

NGO claims fund misuse in hybrid rice program, seeks Congress inquiry

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—A coalition of non-government organizations has sought an investigation of what it said was the possible misuse of P26.1 million in seed subsidy for hybrid rice production program in four provinces.

The Rice Watch and Action Network (RWAN) reported that the actual beneficiaries used for hybrid rice production was smaller than what was released by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The DA, according to a RWAN report, provided subsidy in the hybrid rice program under the Government Management And RBMA rice program.

RWAN confirmed here a Luzon seminar-workshop on the impact of hybrid rice technology and its imminent infestation program. The possible release of seeds intended for hybrid rice production was among those taken up in the workshop.

Jean Yusol, a member of the RWAN's research team, said in Isabela, considered the "hybrid rice capital of the country," the DA reported that 6,000 bags of hybrid seed were planned to be used rice in 2006.

But records at the provincial agricultural office (PAO) in that province reported that only 16,800 hectares were actually planted to hybrid rice, Yusol said.

She said the discrepancy resulted in the unaccounted amount of more than P30.2 million released by the DA as subsidy for the seeds used by the farmers. She said the DA provided 50 percent of the cost of seeds to the farmers.

Each bag of hybrid rice seed, Yusol said, cost P2,400. The subsidy was P1,200 per bag, she added.

The farmers, following recommendations for hybrid rice technology, used a bag of hybrid rice seed per hectare in commercial production.

In Nueva Ecija, Yusol said, the DA reported a total of 14,280 hectares of riceland planted to hybrid rice but the provincial's PAO reported an actual planted area of only 9,814 hectares. The discrepancy amounted to an additional P5.4 million in terms of seed subsidy, she said.

Similar discrepancies in the reported and actual area planted to hybrid rice in 2004 were also found in Davao del Sur and Bukidnon, she said.

The total amount covered and/or subsidy in the four provinces reached P26,115,200, Yusol said, adding that the findings were confirmed in a 2004 Commission on Audit (COA) report.

She said the officers and members of the coalition would seek a congressional investigation of the possible misuse of the Fund.

She said the request would be bigger as it involved only those for the seed subsidy. There are non-seed expenditures in the program, she added.

Dr. Nilda Maldonan, the DA's rice program director, welcomed the investigation, sought by RWAN, saying the funds were used properly.

"The hybrid rice program funds were used appropriately. Maybe they (RWAN) did not look at all the records about fund releases that year for the program," he said.

Cop in girl's slay charged with murder

CAMP TICSIETE LIM, LAGUNA—A Laguna policeman tagged in the killing of a seven-year-old girl, who turned out to be a granddaughter of Laguna Board Member Nelly Bagtas, was charged with murder and frustrated murder at the provincial prosecutor's office yesterday.

PO2 Jilick Balagtasbalan, a member of the San Pablo City Police Office, was indicted in the killing of Princess Mae Bagtas and the wounding of brother-in-law Marcelo Torres, Jr.

Supt. Gil Blando Lobite, head of the Task Force Tricha Mae, said police also filed charges against Balagtasbalan's two co-policemen-companions who allegedly shot Torres while she was collecting rent from market stalls in Barangay Bayhaeta, Los Baños on Wednesday night.

Torres survived the attack but Bagtas, who was hit by a stray bullet in the head, died while being rushed to a hospital.

Lobite said Balagtasbalan turned himself in to his superiors on Sunday. He said the policeman denied the killing.

Police have also released sketches of the two suspects.

Chief Supt. Josue Gerasas, Calabarzon police director, said there would be no whitewash in the investigation of the case.

He said he ordered the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Calabarzon to take the lead in the investigation and hunt the two other suspects.

"We will not rest until the perpetrators of this heinous crime are brought to the bar of justice," Gerasas said.

The police commander also promised to give financial assistance to the family of the victim.

"We will not let the family of Princess suffer financially. We will help them," he said.

Bagtas was overjoyed when he learned that the police had already identified the killers of his granddaughter.

"I am very happy that the police have already identified the killers of my granddaughter. I hope they will be arrested soon," he said.

Bagtas said he was not aware that Balagtasbalan was a policeman.

"I did not know that he was a policeman. I thought he was a civilian," he said.

Bagtas said he was not aware that Balagtasbalan

METRO
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Like Ever G. Dizon

Text or e-mail feedback:
(type in "text metro [spelling] [message to 2467 (Globe) or 483 (Smart)]

BI exec, 8 others face raps for suspect's deportation

By Marvjan C. Ortiz

A TOP OFFICIAL OF THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) and eight others are facing charges filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for allegedly facilitating the illegal deportation of a Chinese kidnap-for-ransom suspect last May.

Charged before the Office of the Ombudsman were Fitmed Bersabe, chief of the BI intelligence division; Supt. Wendy Rosario, former acting chief of the BI Civil Security Unit; Insp. Noel Espinosa, former acting watcher of the BI Detention Center; Alex Bolado, non-normal confidential agent assigned at the BI Detention Center; Allan Reyes, BI immigration officer assigned at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA); and Joselito Bayadani, a former confidential agent assigned at the BI Detention Center.

The NBI and National Anti-Crime Task Force (NACTF) identified the three other suspects as Antonieta Mendiolaz (not Escorial) Asuncion or "Tonette," a Sri Lankan held at the BI Detention Center; Engelbert Ng Sy; and Wen Fanming.

Investigation conducted by the NBI Special Task Force (STF) led by Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda showed that suspect Zhang Dezhi's deportation was done "upon a pending hiatus for ransom case to court."

Zhang was arrested in connection with the kidnap of businesswoman Jackie Ng in San Fernando City, La Union on Sept. 27, 2005.

The participation in the case was later downgraded to accessory after the release of the original principal, allowing him to post bail with a fellow suspect.

After charges of being an undesirable and undocumented alien were filed against him, Zhang was again arrested on Nov. 15, 2005 and brought to the BI Detention Center in Bicutan.

The STF report said that Asuncio had requested the NBI for a second check of Zhang's last April 18. Same thought the check showed Zhang's record as a kidnap for ransom suspect, an NBI document that was found to have been faked indicated he had a clean background.

Allegedly conniving with immigration officials, Asuncio said in a statement that he was used as coordinator with Ng and Zhang's wife Wen in purchasing a plane ticket and getting the fake documents later used in the suspect's illegal deportation.

Asuncio added that he gave P50,000 to Bersabe, who was in charge of the BI Detention Center at that time, in exchange for Zhang's deportation.

The NBI also said in its complaint that being the BI Intelligence Division chief, Bersabe fully knew that Zhang had a pending case at the San Fernando City RTC.

"It is not coincidental that the second check was conducted in April 2005 and the original plan to deport Zhang was also within the first month of the same month," the complaint said.

The suspects face charges of violation of Article 171 or falsification of Public Documents, Presidential Decree 1829 or Obstruction of Apprehension and Prosecution of Criminal Offenders, and Republic Act 3019 or Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act in the Office of the Ombudsman.

The immigration officers face an additional charge for violating Article 223 of the Revised Penal Code after allegedly planning Zhang's escape with the suspect's roommates despite being public officers.

URBAN poor groups took to the streets of Quezon City yesterday, this time on board pedicabs, and demanded the scrapping of trade agreements under the World Trade Organization which they said had not improved their living conditions. AUTHOR PHOTO

Fiery Monday as 3 fires hit south Metro

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DESPITE THE COOL DECEMBER breeze, southern Metro Manila had a fiery spell yesterday morning when a total of three fires which destroyed P10 million-worth of property. Fortunately, there were no reports of casualties or injuries.

The first fire started at three minutes to 9 a.m. at 101 Quirino Avenue corner 10th, Nichi Extension in Barangay Don Bosco, Parañaque City shortly after 3 a.m. yesterday, SFO3 Jesus Bayaca told the Inquirer.

The blaze started at the KTV Bar, a videoke bistro located on the third floor, then spread to the other floors and some bystanders also reported hearing loud explosions.

"It [explosion] was that loud [and] we are still counting if," said Bayaca.

When the fire area put out at 10:30 a.m., firemen pegged the damage at P4.5-million.

Hours an hour later, a two-storey building on F. Burgos corner Kalayaan in Barangay Poblacion, Makati City caught fire, causing P5 million-worth of property.

Fifi Christine Music Center and four bars were burned—the Stardust Club, Papillon Bar, Nite Bar and Enchanter Room—all located in the building owned by a certain Ms. Banda.

Concino said the fire started at the Papillon Bar located on the ground floor.

"It was the building's utility area, after bars at adjacent building, so that area, after was the fire," said the fire investigator.

The cause of the fire has yet to be determined, she said.

At 11:58 a.m., a two-storey house on Cypress Street, Sampaloc Subdivision in Barangay Marcelo, Parañaque City went up in flames after an air-conditioning unit allegedly short circuited in one of the rooms on the second floor, said SFO3 Teodoros Gutchalian.

The room's occupant, a certain Glen Bautista, was away in a nearby beach fun-run.

The six occupants, two of them babies, related that at 9 a.m., the lights in the house were already flickering.

About P3 million was lost in the fire, Gutchalian said.

'Pedicabs' join street protest vs WTO policies

By DJ Yap

HUNDREDS TOOK TO THE ROAD around Quezon City yesterday not to ride on passengers but to protest against policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Dozens of people from rural and urban poor communities met at a caravan from Agham Road to Elliptical Road on board the pedicabs to call for a stop to what they said were anti-poor trade policies of the international organization.

Led by the anti-poverty coalition Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), the "Pedicab Caravan" was the first in a series of protest actions against the upcoming ministerial conference in Hong Kong on Dec. 16.

From the major bypass in front of the Philippine Science High School, the 1,000-strong contingent rode toward the Quezon Memorial Circle, finally converging in front of the Department of Agriculture where they conducted a brief program.

Pedicabs are the primary mode of transportation used by the poorest of the poor, one of the leaders said, explaining the group's choice of a symbol in express their protest.

"The pedicabs are genuinely indicative to poor folks; some families even use the pedicabs as their homes," said Ligay Bautista-Lim, secretary general of the Kilusang ng Sambahan ng Maliliit ng Pilipinas (Kasama).

Kasama chair Edwin Nagal added that pedicabs symbolize the situation of every poor Filipino fishermen, farmers, factory workers and urban workers.

Six years under the WTO has not improved the country's economy nor uplifted the people's living conditions, the demonstrators said, so they demanded the scrapping of trade agreements entered into by the government.

Nagal said the Philippines should not join the negotiations during the Hong Kong meeting since it would only "cross out/ten zero to collapse, and the agricultury cannot to suffer more, owing to the dumping of cheap imported goods and agricultural products in the country."

Bautista-Lim said millions of workers had already lost their jobs because of unfair competition from imports in the steel, textile and mining industries.

WTO policies refer to indirect barriers in the trading of goods and services, opening member countries to global competition, the demonstrators added.

This could lead to the gradual loss of control over basic industries and resources, thus ruining the costs of such services and making these more inaccessible to the poor.

Only countries in the developed world, such as the United States, stand to benefit from globalized trade, said Penny Hamburan, national president of Anakpawis Partylist Representa.

Kasama chair Edwin Nagal

Now, who's biased?

ON TARGET
Raymund Villanueva

YESTERDAY'S FRONTPAGE news item said the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and government forces undertook a joint operation to "rescue" Sunshine Cruz and Cesar Montano from Moro bandits in Lanao.

So long as the couple, Felipe and Helen Lucanas, were unharmed when they were "rescued," the MILF and the government can make up a story and everybody will just pretend to and be belief.

I put the word "rescued" in quotation marks because there was no rescue.

Why? Because the people who kidnapped the couple were MILF members.

In short, it was a sham.

The government knew caught the help of the MILF in rescuing the kidnap victims, knowing that the rebels were holding the couple.

The MILF went through the motions of "mobilizing" all its forces in Lanao del Sur to go after the kidnappers.

Of course, the kidnappers were already safe beforehand by their MILF commanders to release their victims. And they did.

That's why when the "bandits" were cornered, there was not a single shot fired.

And the alleged bandits were able to escape.

Who could have escaped from a 1,000-man dragnet supposedly put up by the MILF against the kidnappers?

Well, all's well that ends well. . . .

A Moro leader, who heads a Muslim organization, said I'm in cahoots with Muslims.

This leader ordered my editors in the Inquirer to fire me because of my supposed bigotry.

Here's my reply to that Muslim leader:

Bigotry is a two-way street. The non-Muslims are bigots when we blame against the Muslims because the Muslims are biased against the Christians.

Here's why. Educated Muslims and religious leaders are to blame for the bigotry of the Muslims against the Christians. They don't discipline the minds of some of their brothers that the Crusades are ancient history.

In the Middle Ages, the Christians launched campaigns for the recovery of the Holy Land which was then in the hands of Muslims.

Those infamous campaigns, now called the Crusades, pitted Christian soldiers against Muslim warriors.

But since educated Muslims and Moro leaders label their poor countrymen by the sack, they still teach them the "holy war is jihad."

Muslim country foreign ministers, for many Muslims are practically held in bondage by their educated and religious leaders.

I once asked an unenlightened Muslim why there was bad blood between Christian Muslims and their Christian brothers. His reply: "Kasi [because] kayo ay mga dumbbells [because you sided with the Spaniards]."

Another misconception dramatized by educated and religious Muslims is on their brothers. Christians are dirty not only because they use paper in wiping themselves but also because they eat pork.

Now, who's biased?

MetroBriefs

Quick-thinking witnesses saved trader

POLICE said Asian witnesses became the key to quick coordination between responding police teams which rescued a Chinese-Filipino businessman from kidnappers in Pasay on Sunday afternoon. "The calm from the concerned citizens were very timely. If it were not for their presence of mind, things could have gone worse," Pasay Police Director Senior Supt. Jose Garcia told the newsmen. Rescued was Alvin Co, 38, a trader, a certain Ding, another driver were rescued and a fourth driver after they were abducted near Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Tonite. Floor

Alvin C. Tandoc Jr.

'Killer highway' claims another life

QUEZON City's "killer highway," Commonwealth Avenue, claimed another life yesterday after a woman biker-engineer daughter to arrive was hit and killed by a speeding bus in Commonwealth. The accident happened at 5:30 a.m. with 29-year-old daughter Marjorie, while biker-engineer was rushed to their main center Zaragoza Street, according to Quezon City traffic police. The bus from Cubao Bus Lines, with plate number TMV 650, sped away instead of stopping. Guerrero died instantly, while her daughter, a graduate of Quezon City University, suffered minor injuries and was brought to the Quezon Medical Center. The driver was still at large as of press time, but the manager of the bus company had reportedly offered to shoulder the family's hospital and funeral expenses. Commonwealth Avenue is one of the most dangerous roads in Metro Manila, according to data from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. EJ Dy

Fake Reno products seized

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) seized some P600,000-worth of fake Reno shoes from opened from three grocery stores in Quezon City on Monday morning. The fake products were being sold at Rambo's Footbag owned by a certain Kevin Chua at Elan Ilo Chua Industrial #7 Sitio Silver, San Rafael Village, Tanay, Manila; the Pasay-Aguas Grocery, also owned by Chua and located at 1141 Pasay-Aguas St., also in Tanay, and at J. Grocery owned by Yang Kiaoming from Aguinaldo Street, Commonwealth, Quezon City. The two traders face charges of violating the Intellectual Property Code and trademark infringement. Maryann F. Ortiz

Cop shoots another by accident

AN ACCIDENTAL shooting involving two policemen Sunday morning in Manila marked the other-wise peaceful 23rd Simbahan Asian Games, which officially started yesterday. Police Senior Inspector Ernesto Espinosa Regional Police Office Tactical Operation Center identified the policemen as PO3 Virgilio Alviola and PO1 Rodolfo G. Aunap of the Northern Police District. Both were temporarily assigned to provide security to the ISA Games athletes and delegates. Alviola was on board a police car in Binondo, Aunap was on foot patrol, the two police officers were at the hotel lobby when Aunap's bag, which contained rifle ammos from the latter's service firearm, fell to the floor and went off, accidentally shooting in the left thigh. He was brought by driving to the hospital for treatment. Jhaz-ryn C. Corrupal

'Angels' concert at La Salle on Dec. 18

THE MIDDLE Institute of Learning and Angel Die Schools in Mandaluyong City will host a fundraising concert titled "The Sounds of Angels" on Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. Joaquin's Theater, La Salle Greenhills. The concert aims to raise funds for the schools' projects and activities after the Dec. 26 Tsunami disaster. Established for children, seven-shock-attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder, autism-shock and mental retardation. Their talents be pre-school and elementary shock children. Children with autism and other related disorders. The foundation aims to give these children and their families the hope of a bright future through education despite their disabilities. For donations please call Jessica Dy, downtown at 631-0000 or 0920-90-96.

Ex-justice is YMCA prexy anew

FORMER SUPREME COURT Justice Regino C. Hermosisima Jr. has been endorsed national president of the Young Men's Christian Association of the Philippines (Ymca-na), a senior member of the Judicial and Bar Council, and other officials will be inducted into office on Jan. 14.

The YMCA national board will also hold its first meeting on the same day, according to YMCA National General Secretary Levi C. Ibanez.

Makati goes hi-tech

By Jocelyn R. Uy

MAKATI CITY RESIDENTS CAN look forward to quick and prompt police response in case of an emergency.

The local government has finished installing the Global Positioning System (GPS) in 35 of its mobile vehicles, mainly used by policemen and other security and rescue agencies in the City Hall-announced yesterday.

Mayor Jejomar Binay inspired by the advanced emergency response systems used in the United States, decided to install the GPS to find up the city's security and emergency response capabilities, Jose Salgado, Makati Information and Community Relations head, told the Inquirer yesterday.

The GPS is a software program that pinpoints the location of vehicles on a 24/7 -24 hours a day, 7 days a week) basis, allowing the market to immediately deploy the vehicle nearest to an emergency for response, he explained.

"It will help cut the response time of Makati's emergency units," Binay said in a statement, adding that in the future, it would take policemen and other rescue operations 12 minutes to respond to a call for help. But with the GPS, they could get to the site of an emergency in just five minutes.

All tracking activities will be supervised at the Makati Command Center, which is being set up on the 29th floor of the city hall. This makes Makati the first local government unit to open a command center in the country patterned after those in the US.

When fully operational, the center will be able to answer emergency calls from various points in the city and immediately dispatch response teams from the police, fire, emergency health and rescue services or other public safety agencies, added Salgado.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Zúñiga G. Velarde

Desperately seeking Brocka

'Serious preservation problem' makes modern Pinoy classics inaccessible

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AT THE TORINO INTERNATIONAL Film Festival, held in the northern Italian town from Nov. 11 to 19, six Lino Brocka masterpieces were screened, along with the newer works of fellow Pinoys Lav Diaz and Jun Robles.

The screenings of the Filipino films were organized by Roger Garcia, the festival's program consultant for style.

Hong Kong-born and US-based Dadi Pacuganco Garcia reminds a staunch supporter of Pinoy movies, in spite of many obstacles along the way.

At the time of his arch visit to the Philippines last August, he had encountered much difficulty in gathering the six titles for Torino's Brocka retrospective—"Tinimbang Ka Subalit Kulang," "Maynila, Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag," "Insiang," "Jaguar," "Bona," and "Manikluhod: Kapit sa Patalim."

Global treasure hunt

Garcia found only two of the movies in Manila—a 35mm copy of "Tinimbang" from the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and a DVD copy of "Bona, Kapatid" from Tony Gloria of Unitel. The CCP had acquired its copy from the British Film Institute, while Unitel's Tanco Entertainment is releasing several Brocka classics on DVD, available online (www.classiflicks.com).

Although the CCP has some Brocka prints, some had no subtitles or were in Sagalo or "unscreenable condition," Garcia said. Therefore, Gloria is doing digital restoration work."

It took "lengthy research," nothing short of a global treasure hunt, before Garcia succeeded in completing the Brocka lineup.

Garcia located the rest of the titles at the Cinemateque Française in France, with the help of Pierre Eliaincar and Alain Jalladeau. Riviere is the same Frenchman who introduced Brocka to the world by bringing "Tinimbang" to Cannes in 1976. Jalladeau, director of the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes, France, has long championed Brocka's works.

"There is no longer a copy of Brocka's Angela Markado," UMD Star Film winner in Manila, "Garcia said.

A panel discussion held in Torino, with Riviere, Jalladeau and Garcia as speakers, underscored the "savvy state of affairs in film preservation."

Also an active participant in the Torino conference was Hercules A. Brosnar, a Pittsburgh screenwriter who's now married to an Ilonggo and based in Europe. With the screen name Pax Brosnar, she acted in Brocka classics like "Tinimbang" and "Bona, Kapatid," the weekend Brocka for her growth as an actress and said "he now watches over me in my work, running a children's theater group in Torino."

On the Torino website, film fest organizers noted that Brocka "does not need rediscovering, but his films have been absent from the screen for many years . . . As the moment, his films are inaccessible due to serious conservation problems."

Critical conscience

The Torino forum highlighted the importance of Brocka's films because they "coexist to be a reference point (albeit not a model) for new generations of Filipino filmmakers . . . Lav Diaz . . . considers him a sort of critical conscience."

Garcia concurred, describing Brocka's oeuvre as "a mixture of opposition that challenges the status of things and paints a terrible picture of a society in total desperation."

Declared the Torino website: Brocka's legacy "is a cinema in open conflict with the Grocers and in internal conflict with the industry—a cinema that is radical and popular at the same time."

LINO Brocka at work on "Bona" in 1979

Pretty Baby Cassy

CASSY Lagsagit is a pint-sized boy-certified fashionista, according to her parents, Carmina Villaroel and Zanny Legsagit. "She's very conscious of her looks. She loves mimicking shampoo-commercial models. She likes to wear heart-shaped things —and she's a food for pride!" says Carmina. The five-year-member and daughter chanced upon a kiddie accessories shop at the Podium called Pinkbox. Carmina recalls, they both flipped. Now the girl is the store's official endorser—in the lips old age of 4!

Reader defends Plinky's ex-BF

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

BY MY PREVIOUS COLUMN, I promised to let you in on more details about Plinky Recto's career-boosting partner, but as press time Plinky and I have not spoken yet. As soon as we do, I will give you a blow-by-blow account (of his blows she endured?). Rest assured, I'm giving way to an e-mail of a reader who comes in defense of the "powerful ex-lover" of Plinky.

All in the name of balanced and fair reporting.

Hi Dolly Ann,

I'm one of the avid readers of your column and I had the wonderful opportunity to serve you years back through some of our common friends.

All I thought I wasn't planning on writing you, the Plinky Recto issue caught my attention. Given your obvious sentiments in today's column, I decided to (share with you) some pieces of information which, I am certain, will help you exercise (correct) fairness in your coming reports.

Before doing so, I just want to make it clear that I am in no way related to any of the parties concerned. Nor was I paid, influenced or, worse, threatened to write this. I just feel that there are some matters way beyond the public's knowledge...things that should be made public, if only to give this whole Plinky Pearl-Official Man saga much needed balance and credibility.

Ask the help

FIRST, I suggest that you interview the former relatives, maids, drivers and other helpers who have left Plinky's household because of her fits of hysteria and I urge you to verify this: the doctor at people, regardless of who's in front of them—outside the gate, in the grocery etc. She treats her maids like trash and talks to them like they're dirt. Powerful Man hated this. He used to walk out on her every time she had a violent (I mean raging) mood swing. Most disposable of all (and again, there are people only too willing to support this statement) is her (ex) wife—and I mean nobody—is spared from her wrath. She lets her own child with any kitchen utensil she can get hold of. Ask the yaya.

Second, I urge you to get copies of the court records—affidavits, etc. She keeps claiming she only wants him out of her life. How come she's asking for P1 million, plus P200,000 monthly allowance for the child? Isn't he out of her life? Isn't he out of her house? Isn't he out of her bed? Isn't he out of her money? Isn't he out of her life? Isn't he out of her life? Isn't he out of her life

SPORTS

E-mail us at ... Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Molina, other veterans gain full SEAG stardom

Country	G	S	B	Total
PHILIPPINES	113	76	85	274
THAILAND	91	77	137	305
VIETNAM	66	82	82	207
MALAYSIA	60	67	80	183
INDONESIA	48	72	83	204
SINGAPORE	40	31	53	124

Country	G	S	B	Total
MYANMAR	18	34	47	99
LAOS	3	4	22	29
BRUNEI	0	2	3	5
CAMBODIA	0	1	8	9
TIMOR LESTE	0	0	3	3
TOTAL	430	407	564	1401

FIREWORKS light up the sky above the Quirino Grandstand as the 23rd Southeast Asian Games finally drew to a close. www.sea-games...

New aces join roll of honor

SWIMMER MIGUEL MOLINA, diver Shiela Mae Perez and rower Benjie Tolentino finally rose to stardom and sparked the country's breakthrough overall victory in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Molina, a 21-student whose parents reside in Japan, came up with three individual golds, a silver and a bronze in the relay and stood as the forebrain of the unprecedented and successful 87 campaign that produced a final gold-silver-bronze medal harvest of 113-76-85.

Perez also has two individual victories and one in the synchronized event while Tolentino stood for a single gold and two in the pairs categories as they finally asserted themselves in the country's third staging of this biennial spectacle that drew 11 countries.

There were a few heartbreaks but they were amazed under by the explosive performances of the established stars led by former world pool champion Alex Pagulayan, snooker's Willy Wang, golfer Jessi Pagenese, taekwondo jin Mario Antonio Abaro, karate-do Gretchen Malalad, boxer Harry Tabamo, gymnast Jho Diaconio and skeet shooter Abel Brian Rosario.

The Cavite-based Pagulayan stars than justified his recent temperament of objectivity by scooping three golds in lead size of a team that handily ruined the world famous Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Ramon Abrazo and Armando Arañez wound up with two golds and Bobbies Asor reached the winning effort in the women's division as the star entries captured eight of the 14 golds at stake.

Wang duplicated his golden double in the 2003 Vietnam Games and Vicky Ting also added two victories for the rookie team that became the most successful contingent with 11 triumphs in 22 events.

In his last year as an amateur, Pagenese won the individual title and sparked the team's route to victory while Abaro, who came close to a medal in the last Olympics, sparked taekwondo's six-gold upheaval.

(SEE PAGE A21)

Reyes bags P10.8M in Florida 8-ball tilt

REYES: In the groove

EFREN "BATA" Reyes is far from losing over the ball, he's King of the Hill.

The 50-year-old Filipino hit-barrik won-dominated defending champion Mike Sigel, 6-3, 6-5, Sunday to rule the $75K King of the Hill 9-Ball Shootout in Orlando, Florida, and earn his biggest prize ever of $300,000 (approximately P16.8 million).

Reyes reached the final of the $1-mil-

Wushu bets score heaviest for RP

By Mara Anthony Reyes

WUSHU, TRACK AND FIELD, BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER, BOXING, traditional boat race and taekwondo provided majority of the gold medals that sparked the Philippines to the overall championship of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games which ended yesterday.

Based on a pre-Games projection, wushu outdid itself by winning 11 of the 22 golds at stake in the Chinese martial art, improving on its 2003 Vietnam SEAG haul of seven.

While unwise officials justified their request to add more events the time, the athletes were up to the task as they stayed for months training in China to learn from the kung fu masters themselves.

Athletics, whose presidents had boasted of an overall title in the sport with as many as 35 golds, started slow and lost in zig-zag to the 50's No. 1 gold medal machine for the first time in three SEAGs.

Track and field bets Go Sing Kik has apologized for making an empty boast, but asked that the performances of the country's top track and field stars are properly recognized.

"I'm sorry, I overestimated it, but please bear in mind that my athletes performed exceptionally well with two of them, Dannyer thrower Arniel Ferreira and long jumper Henry Dagredo setting new SEAG records," said Go.

Billiards and snooker as well as traditional boat race should be the 80% to 90% of the Philippines' SEAG campaign. The rest comes from eight of the 14 golds won without blowhorns and lungs from tennis, and the runners pulled off an unprecedented sweep of all the six gold medals staked.

Boxing didn't give a projection but came up with eight gold medals—four of them in the women's events—and is the present standard for Thai fighters as overall champions. Taekwondo retained the overall title as promised, with six gold medals, although the lofty goal to match the 1991 Manila SEAG output of eight golds.

The young aquatics squad promised seven golds but grabbed a record nine while producing two of the Games' most successful athletes.

Shirlo Glor Oreta captured three golds to give diving the first place, while Miguel Molina accounted for three of the four individual golds in swimming and emerged as the top Filipino athlete in the SEAG by adding an individual silver and a bronze in the medley relay.

Also fulfilling their promises were dancers, pests which scooped the titles in the Standard and Latin American events; the 10-km pioneered triathlon event which topped three golds; bowling which grabbed four, including the men's and women's Masters golds, and wrestling which surpassed the four it pledged to win by coming up with five golds.

As expected, softball delivered a golden double on its return to the Games, and the baseball gold wrestle the keg men before the fine pastime was thrown.

Judo, karatedo, archery and body building ended for the number of gold medals they promised to do, but the exceptional SEAG sets many that, which ventured three of the seven golds away from the Thais, who were expected to sweep their easier spot.

Of the 50s which missed the gold, table tennis was the most impressive after clinching a first ever silver through Richard Gonzales in the men's singles. He also sparked the RP men's team to an earlier bronze medal, which the country has achieved in 2003.

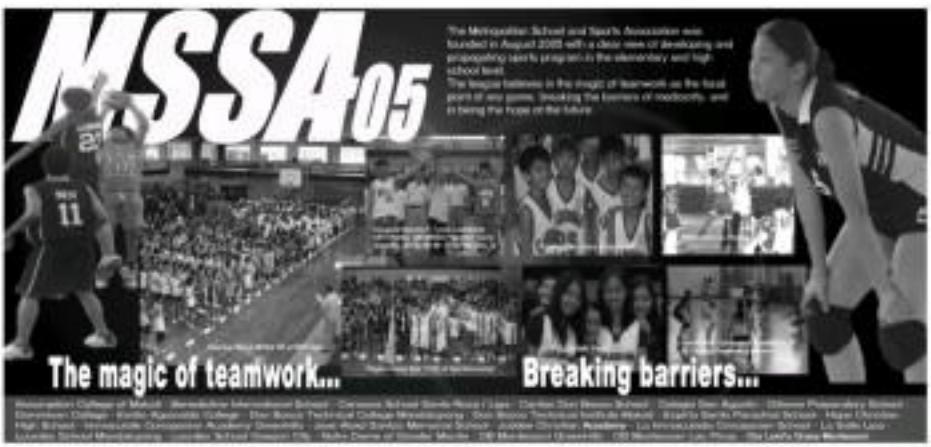
Badminton, whose victory became the hottest commodity in the absence of basketball, produced only a lone title in Jovencito Sia.

Cruise-kayak linked to get a share of the seven golds, while shots, satisfied by players to stick with cell, city and running friendliness Mark Penguen, left a big no-go.

Men's football played beyond expectations with the help of 35-foreign players, but the women's side fell flat on its face after promising a medal.

Though cycling took two golds, it was still way below the promise of six gold medals, while triathlon predicted was golds but could only score up with a silver and a bronze.

Rowings had one bronze but boat heads came up with a gold, while volleyball produced just a bronze from the men's and women's indoors and beach events.



Molina, other vets gain full stardom

From page A10

Mishiel, a former bounty queen contestant, made sure to harass along with two other first-time veterans, Talisman recruit Ivy Sight Ho-at the 59 frames. Achieved Thailand for the overall title with eight gold-and

Rommel accounted for the two victories salvaged in gymnastics while Rosario, silver medalist the last time out, won two of the three golds nailed by the duration.

Jasmine Figueroa, whose mark was following his impressive stint in the olympics, knocked out in archery for a rookie counterpart, Amaya Fin, more than made up for that debacle by winning twice.

Mashiela Tee, the youngest Filipino member at 16, was the latest to benefiting after rolling the meet's Masters after an earlier impressive victory by Lita Chinabo in the women's Masters.

Jhoar Ang took over as new 400-meter king over Irene Candelario in athletics where Jerwel Ibanez, Jhonnier Abreu and Ebony Lagnel Jhong complete SEAG records.

Ang went on to power the 80 4 x 400-relay team to victory even as Eduardo Buenavista bowed out as the country's long distance king in shame following his disqualification as winner of the 5,000-meters for illegally blocking a Thailander, who was later declared first-placed.

Mike Jeremiah Cabanigan, the Asian Games equestrian champion, was not in shape and fell off his horse, but still helped the XP subsidiary Team Luzon to win the team gold.

Tennis experienced a renaissance of sorts, both in namida, awarded its best effort ever, paired with Cecil Mamiit, churning the second and winning two gold medals along with Johnny Alcantara Dalisay.

Pocah Pualwei an entire Pasaleen delegation decided to skip those games including six of twenty-six members of the XI and Harapa, the victories of Dhaniel and Co. were assured to the hilt by the crowd at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Courts.

But many of the fil-foreign recruits failed to deliver although some of them performed in a manner that raised Filipino spirits like the "green" boxers who nearly boosted the Justo football team to a first-ever semifinal spot.

Also deserving credit were the traditional host rowers, who pulled off a record six of six in their events and the many that were there times.

The most notable non-winner was Rafael Gonzales who gifted the Philippines its first ever silver medal in table tennis Gonzales also bagged the country's first bronze in the 1999 Games in Brunei and matched that effort this time by pocketing the team's team in third place.

Another medal, this time for trailblazing, went to the Elain Perez Center, which was severely criticized for charging any media at a meet's past that left not only the foreign media agitated but the local ones as well.

Manny S. Castillo

DESPITE SEAG SUCCESS

PSC faces tough fight for budget

BACOLOD CITY—BEYOND OF A BRIGHTER future after the Philippines claimed its first ever Southeast Asian Games overall crown, the Philippine Sports Commission faces the arduous task of urging the Department of Budget and Management to increase its budget for next year.

The PSC's P107 million budget for this year should be restored for 2006, or each SEA Games gold that the XP delegation brought home will be outweighed to P1 million, said Rep. Monico Puentevella, who is a former Philippine Sports commissioner.

The 1998, headed by Secretary Romulo Neri, has proposed that only 927 million be allocated next year for the sports agency The PSC earlier requested a P200 million budget.

Despite the meager 2006 budget provided by the Department of Budget and Management, the Filipino athletes still performed creditably at the SEA Games.

"It's [DBM] would not increase the budget, it would be better that its officials and employees be the ones to compete in the next Asian and Olympic Games," said Puentevella, who will take up the PSC issue during a Congress session today.

The 2006 Asian Games is set in Doha, Qatar while Beijing, China, will be the host for the 2008 Olympic Games.

"It would be adding insult to injury for the athletes if the proposed budget for 2006 will not be revoked," said Puentevella.

The PSC, chaired by William "Butch" Ramirez, is responsible for providing financial assistance to the national sports associations for the development of athletes. Christine D'Ino, INR Magsaysay Bureau

Top female moneymakers in US and RP movies

JOB Market

JULIA ROBERTS MAY BE ON A LONG BREAK from acting to care for her twin twin babies, but she's still on top of the movie heap, holding on to her $20M salary/fee per film, according to a third-

Instead Reporter industry survey.

Mandy Kidman hasn't had a hit in quite a while, but she's still the No. 2 bet with $17M.

Don't look now, but Reese Witherspoon has surged ahead of the competition, tying with Owen Wilson/more at $15M.

Renee Zellweger, Cameron Diaz and Angelina Jolie are in a three-way tie for the next three spaces, with $12M each. Jim Carrey/Jennifer Aniston are the runners of the film category, from $11-M to $10 M per movie.

Julia Roberts didn't figure in the 2004 and 2005 lists, but "Flight Plan" has put her back in the money circle, with $17 M to $18 M.

Neil Cruz/Ben Tiberio makes $3-M per movie, while Jennifer Aniston earns $9M. Aquino's low income because she's just shifted from TV to film acting, but she's already among the top female money-makers in the US film industry.

(Wonder what happened to Sandara Bullock and Jennifer Lopez?)

RP list

ON THE local movie scene, producer-editors-at-Jim the top money guns in Sharon Cuneta and Vilma Santos. No younger aspirants? Well, we've told that many young talents on under studio contracts, which are generally less generous than freelancers' fees.

In any case, most local stars have lowered their salary fees, in recognition of the hard times that the Filipino movie industry is currently experiencing.

In fact, actors make such more money these days on television, especially as the top-rated longrunning TV dramas/comedies, which ensure them of regular incomes by months or end.

Happily for US stars, the American film scene is doing quite well, thank you, and their salaries from are made high.

Of all female stars, however, only Sidwell has joined the exclusive "$20 M club" with such superstars like Tom Cruise, Mel Gibson and Tom Hanks.

Why has she been so singularly blessed? Well, she's been around a long time, has her passionate fans/ crazed, to boot, has most current starring hits/ others several big up the box office ("Two Weeks/wk" and "Dead's Eleven") or won her actress/genius ("Frozen").

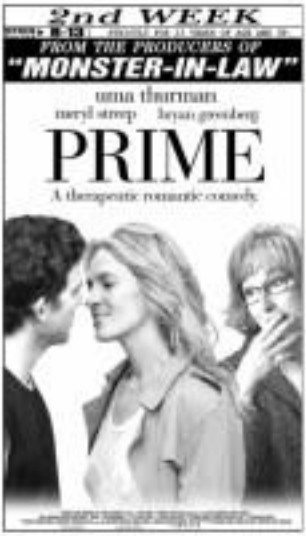
But, if Roberts has put her career temporarily on hold, until her talents for music and academics/ acting. Movie-creative clients take years to get off the ground, so even now, she's already being consulted not to do projects right after her long "family-vacation" ends.../if/ the price is right.

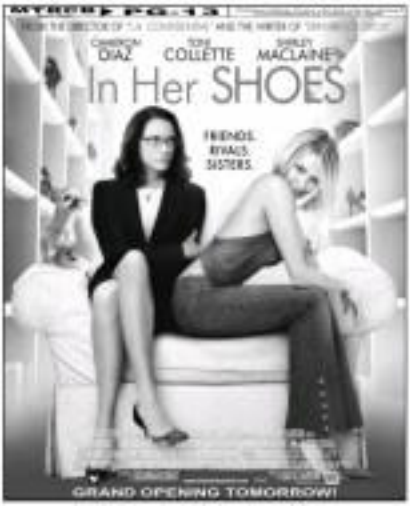
To put the subject in perspective, however, those top-million talents have actually carried in movies. Tom Hanks, for instance, Julianne Roberts has dramatically shed other top stars have brought down their asking prices, in favor of "points" on film grosses enable them to earn even more after a movie is shown—if it turns out to be a hit.

The best example of this is Tom Cruise, who signed for production pact to "Mission Impossible" and ended up making much more than $20M for starring in that blockbuster. How much more?—Would you believe $60M? Other top stars can take their cue from that?

'The Chronicles of Narnia'

THE FINCH has been on for the world premiere of "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," one of the most anticipated movies of the year. Tomorrow, in the presence of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, the fantasy-fantasy film movie will launched in the Royal Albert Hall and Kensington Garden into





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Nestor U. Torre

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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Reader defends Plinky's ex-BF

simple, because she was about to lose in the race. Isn't it ironic that she likes labelling the ex as the powerful one when it was she who asked the powers that be to influence the judge? at least two powerful people tried — and failed. Now ... she is crying "injustice."

I suggest you talk to lawyer Katrina Legarda and ask why she turned down Plinky's case. Unless why was Plinky turned down by the PetLan brothers? Again, simple. Because Plinky fabricates tales that will eventually catch up with her.

Sadly, the issue here is not evidence — but money. The guy is not as powerful as Plinky says, but he is certainly well off.

Plinky seems so misread the cards. In the past, every time she threw a leg, women and lawyers, hesitate. He would walk out but then can argue her with expensive gifts. This time, he just walked out of her life.

Then, she filed the suit, asking for money. Now she is using the violence issue to get sympathy and yes, to get more money.

She has managed to circumvent the gag order by talking about the case and by giving hints as to its identity.

You are a woman, yes, but a disarming one. You will know the truth when you hear both sides.

Thanks and more power to you.

Ruth Mari Ines (RMari1882@yahoo.com)

Now hang-out

I HAD a blast at the opening of the coolest hangout in San Juan Juliors Bar Resto and Grill (713 J. Abad Santos St. Cassandra) that night. Celebrities galore, including Cesar Montano, Sharon Cuneta, Gloria Isabel Lopez, Aerosmith Brimson and model Marlon Mayugba. Thanks to the gracious owners Cecille Miranel, Sabina and Ronald Bertol and my fine designer of all time, Kendon Santospe, for inviting me. Incidentally in honor, I couldn't have enough of their Cheese steak, crispy pata, delicia al Diablo to name a few of their mouth-watering specialties. I also enjoyed chilling out at their Lpod listening stations. Check out Juliors. It's truly a sophisticated oasis!

Just asking

DIDJEBOY is humming the theme of "Every Big Brother" by Orange and Lemons. It has become like a national anthem already. But did you know that it sounds exactly like "Chanukkah, Oh Chanukkah" by Cast? Is this our cosmic debut, or did Orange and Lemons rip off the song and just wrote in Tagalog lyrics? Does that make the band Pinoy Big Brothers?

Announcements

HOM my cousin Rampex Francis M.—I'm having a blast for "Kalayaan!" on Dec. 11 at Marikina Bravehearts Amphitheater. I'll be performing with The Dawn, Andrew E., Sandwich, Qeen, The Youth, Ely Buendia, Pupil, Imago, Gigibeats, Gloc 8, Dilaw 8, Rico Blanco, Sponge cola, Data Lizzies and many more. Tickets are P150 only.

From Sandrino Grau—I gave birth last night (Dec. 1) to a healthy baby girl weighing 7 pounds and 7 ounces with a length of 48 cm. Thanks for your prayers. We had all submitted a Belay (Grace Montano)

From Anthony Pangilinan:

Hi, Belly,

I just wanted to let you know that I'm here in the US for my 4-year-old son Benjamin's open heart surgery to correct a significant narrowing of the main vessel leading to the heart.

May I flash some people through you?

Last Saturday before we left, my family names in Cebu Belle (Tizi), through Tan Francisco and Reggie Arambulo, will transmit the directions and Merly's list, got together at Smith Center for Benjamin. Thanks to Beth—Chats who came and those who performed. We were able to raise enough funds to help ease the burden of the rest of the procedures. Thanks to Judy V. Montes, C. Richard Klerk, Ray Ann Fuentes, Annie Braid, Cindy Pangilinan, Pam G. Pasko Vacchia and Johnnie Jalane Rivera, Gabriel V. and yes, even the Pangilinan Henana boys. The show was a knockout.

Am requesting for prayers for the successful surgery and quick healing of my son.

(E-mail: anthonypangilinan@yahoo.com)

Thais string up 7th SEAG soccer title

By Cordell P. Tupas
PhilAsian Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—ONE OF THE LONGEST TITLE streaks in the Southeast Asian Games got another extension here Sunday night.

An awesome goal scoring display by crowd favorite Yuwadee Phumthai lanced Thailand to a resounding 3-0 triumph over rival Vietnam in the finals of the men's football tournament at the Bacolod Stadium here.

It was the Thais' seventh straight SEA Games crown in a run that dated back to the 175-edition if the Games in Singapore in 1993, while Vietnam was once again denied of its first crown since 1959. The Thais also humbled the Filipinos, 3-1, in the gold medal game before a host record of 40,000 in the 20th SEA Games seen again.

The Thais, who fashioned out the emphatic win in front of Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop, said their victory was a gift to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who celebrated his 78th birthday Monday.

Going on attack mode right from the get-go, Thailand broke through in the 43rd minute as Worathoi's volley found the back of the net, after a frenetic goal mouth scramble.

Worathoi's last two goals were actually products of the brilliant play at midfield by Datthaisong Thongkiu and the lobbing pass by fellow striker Hayhaw Jithateo, whose pass was converted into an easy goal by Phumthai in the 75th minute.

The 30-year-old Worathoi, who has seen many ad-ventures here for his looks and skills, got his hat-trick on minutes from time, again getting a silky lived from Jithateo inside the box, then beating the Viet keeper.

"This win is a testament of our teamwork," said Worathoi, who emerged as one of the tournament's top scorers with five goals to his credit.

Vietnam's frustrated coach Alfred Riedl said Yuwadee and Jithateo overwhelmed the defense.

"There was no weak point for them," he said. "We were under pressure from about the 45minutes."

Thailand's football team capped the SEAG action in Bacolod which was formally closed by Rep. Monico Puentevella at the Panaad Sunday night in a ceremony highlighted by a fireworks display.

After the battles, it's vacation time for gold medalists

By Leila B. Salaverria

FOR JOWENDRO THUPHILIP-PINES in its first ever overall title in the Southeast Asian Games, all 55 Filipino gold medalists will receive various packages courtesy of the Philippine Tourism authority.

The Filipino champions have a choice of either a trip to Baguio province, to see the world-renowned Banaue Rice Terraces, or to San Fabian, Pangasinan, to enjoy the PTA Beach Resort.

Under the packages announced by the PTA yesterday, the athletes can use for free the agency's facilities, which include the Presidential Rest House in San Fabian and the Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel in Baguio.

The tourism packages are good for three days and two nights, and the athletes are allowed to bring with them two family members each.

PTA General Manager Robert Uson Barbers said they are offering the free vacation in appreciation of the international performances of the Filipino athletes in the Bacolod Games.

"The PTA, in recognition of the hard work, diligence and perseverance of our Filipino athletes and for having given honor and pride to our countrymen, would like to pay tribute to them and offer our tourism services for their much-needed rest and relaxation together with their loved ones," Barbers said in a statement.

The PTA chief also said the free stays were an early Christmas gift to the athletes. The athletes could avail themselves of the packages up to January.

"PTA-Banaue-travel bonanza will definitely add to the monetary reward that our athletes would be getting from the government for their outstanding performance in the SEA Games," Barbers said. "Clearly this is one year will be very special for these athletes."

Barbers also encouraged the athletes and delegates of the participating countries to extend their stay in the Philippines so they can enjoy the country's tourist draws. He said they would be given discounts in most of the tourist attractions here.

Filipino Gold Medalists

Fil-Am romance and more

BACOLOD CITY—SOMEWHAT LOST IN THE din of the 22nd SEA Games is the Fil-Am Golf Championship.

Now holding its 16th edition, the tournament that began making the Guinness Book of World Records in the area of the most number of participants entered in a golf event held anywhere in the world has drawn 1,000 players this time—yet another record. There were 1,040 players last year.

Eighty-six teams were also accepted this year—yet another record. There were 76 last year.

"The tournament keeps growing every year since its birth in 1988," said Pigeon Lubien, the executive editor of Goodlives Today, Bacolod City's most independent newspaper.

Lubien, who has followed this tournament religiously the last 16 years, also writes for The Daily Tribune, the lightweight broadsheet tandemwith.

"The Fil-Am has always been good for the city," said Lubien, crowning his 11th Fil-Am. "It's synonymous to Bacolod City. Tourists in the city discuss up such time it's with us. Definitely, the Fil-Am is a boon to our city."

From The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, I ventured to this city at the break of dawn yesterday to rescue my sojourner with the Fil-Am event and, of course, with the Bacolod Country Club.

Like Lubien, I've also followed the Fil-Am like sugar to an ant. Since I started covering it sometime in the 1980s, I've never missed a single edition, which include the Presidential Rest House in San Fabian and the Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel in Baguio.

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SPECTATOR

Al S. Hendrix

by 20 years ago, there was no stopping.

The last five years or so ever added a new twist to the romance: Idol officiating in the distinguished company of Eday "Susan" Talisaing, Butch Broderio, Jake B. Ayson and the departed Tessie Aguilera.

My portrait for this added dimension to my career goes to Anthony de Leon, the tribune general manager of the Baguio Country Club. Anthony has never wavered in his resolve to have us officiate the Fil-Am from 2002 onwards, a tradition started by Glenn Roth of Cainta Judge Inky in 2001.

Refereeing in golf isn't for the faint of heart. The challenge is already the thrill.

I headed the rules committee of the just-ended SEA Games golf competition and I've never been happier in my life. Was I glad I didn't disappoint the establishment! Co-vice by Vice Admiral Lucio Bernardo, the vice chair of the organizing committee. And if I may brag a little, our rules committee quartet that included Jake Ayson, Glen Castellanta and Jack Imperial did a virtual walk in the park in our officiating duties during the 11 golden golf competitions. Thanks, fellas, and congratulations for a job well done.

And among the not-said in the past in the back nooks amid our glorious overall victory—a first in the SEA Games—here's to Aida Pagsanjan for winning the men's individual golf gold to smashing fashion, firing sub-par rounds every day in the four days for a 72-under par total at the par-74 Negros Country Club (289-69-68-63). Also to Jay Barrios, Marvin Dumandan and Michael Bibat for winning the team gold with Aida; Aurie Aguas (women's individual silver) and the RP women's squad (team silver) composed of Aguas, Frances Bonifacio and Anya Empleo.

Also to the golfers who unfortunately were on the fighting spirit and the sportsmanlike conduct you exhibited during the competitions.

You were humble in victory—the one true much lacking in many of our athletes from around the world today.

* * *

POSTSCRIPT: We theater of Imaart's Talk 'N Text was a big, big help in the communications department regarding my duties as golf referee during the SEA Games. He was likewise instrumental in the success of my coverage of the recent Tokyo Motor Show in Japan and the HSBC Champions golf tournament in Shanghai, China. Mar, your wife, awesome, Mr. Pio.

* * *

E-mail: mrsalph@skbbi.net

Philsoc hails PAL for SEAG assistance

PHILIPPINE SEA GAMES (PhilSoc) president and CEO Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. has commended Philippine Airlines and the Lucio Tan Group of Companies for extending P5M million worth of goods and services for the athletes and officials who participated in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

"The smooth conduct of the 22nd SEA Games would not be possible without the invaluable support of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies, particularly PAL, which provided the basic logistical support in the form of air line tickets," said Cojuangco.

Vilma Cuisumbing

Major support was given by PAL, the official airline of the 22nd SEA Games, through P2M million worth of tickets to regional and domestic points, including Bacolod and Cebu, for the officials of delegations of participating countries.

Century Park Hotel, the Games' Official Hotel, provided 250 rooms and P1 million worth of signing privileges, while Asia Brewery gave one million bottles of Tanduay distilled water.

SMC's extensive support to the 22nd SEA Games (a key part of the airline's long-standing corporate development, as manifested by its sponsorship of the annual PAL Interclub Golf Tournament, the first Philippine climb to Mount Everest in 2001 and the PAL Inter-Sports Tournament.

Bata Reyes bags ₱10.8M in US tilt

[illegible] to the expense of compatriot Mahrio "Marvelous" Morado, 8-4.

Another Filipino pool ace, Francisco Bustamante (aside Marvelous Ben Ian, 8-7.

Bustamante, however, was beaten by Orlando Ables "The Lemon" Sanchez, 1-8, to bow out of the competition in the event which guarantees each participant $10,000 (about ₱540,000).

After losing to Ignacio Ignacio in [illegible] tournaments, Reyes underwent knee eye surgery recently to improve his vision. And it has proven to be beneficial to his game.

Efrenio Pajarillo, Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president hailed the performance of the Philippine bets.

"What could I asked for, Reyes, Bustamante and Morado finished 1-2-3 in the International Pool Tour in Orlando, Florida.

Sportsmen Artanis "Pacific" Pryce, Rory and Dwayne" Long-time Sweetheart, said, " I'm proud of the boys. They inspire the whole nation with their magnificent performance abroad."

Last October, 19-hand Sonny Santiagos, a native of Mandaluyo, Quezon, also became an instant millionaire after securing his biggest pay check at $75,000 in winning the 2005 Mister Billiards Championship Crown in Resorts Atlantic City Atlantic City in New Jersey. Marlon Bernardino

Thailand lifters take overall title; RP settles for 4 medals

BACOLOD CITY—THAILAND POURED ITS campaign with six gold and two silver medals to claim the overall championship of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games weightlifting competition at the Bacolod Convention Plaza here.

The Thai female lifters, spearheaded by Olympic gold medalist Pawina Thongsuk, brought home four gold medals even as Filipino lifters failed to finish in the top three of the women's 75 kg Sunday.

Khunchai Nuthpeera of Thailand took the gold in the men's 94 kg after a 396 kg total in the snatch and clean-and-jerk, while compatriot Sompatsorn Phothisarakham also accumulated 340 kg for the men's 105 kg gold.

But Philippine pride is [illegible] with four medals after FIVE MORE gold medalist Rolando Delos Santos scored the bronze Sunday with a total of 333 kg in the men's 105 kg.

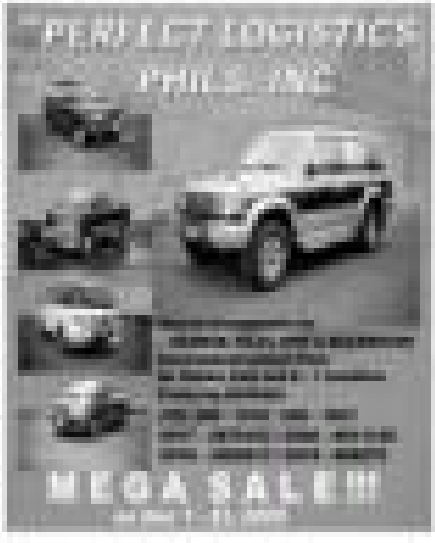
"I'm very satisfied with the performance of my athletes because they surpassed their personal bests," national coach Bienvenido Delos Santos.

Cambodian native Alhambra Alabastro, Jr. took the silver medal in the men's 94 kg, while Rosemarie Rivera grabbed a bronze in the 75 kg.

Cecilia Adiaos bagged the lone medal for the Filipino lifters after registering a 187 kg total in the 63 kg, good enough for bronze.

The Philippines also improved from its single medal haul—a bronze— in the 2003 SEA Games in Vietnam that was achieved by Dolfo Santos.

Christian M. Ilas, PDI Visayas Bureau



SPORTS

Davis lifts Celtics past Knicks

NEW YORK—REX DAVIS MADE TWO FREE throws with 8.7 seconds remaining to cap a 27-point feat that guided the Boston Celtics to a three-road win-off the season, a 102-99 victory over the New York Knicks on Sunday.

Paul Pierce had 24 points, nine rebounds and seven assists to lead the Celtics, who improved to 7-9 while winning for the first time on the road in their fifth attempt.

"We couldn't have asked for a better win," Boston coach Doc Rivers said.

New York had one last chance to tie the game after Davis' free throws but Nate Robinson missed a triple as the final play of the game.

Orlando Nied added 17 points for the Celtics, who won despite allowing the Knicks to go on the line 46 times but making just 35 of those tries.

Also results: Pacers (ten) 112, Hawks (ten) 94; Jacobs (ten) 91, Jackson (ten) 87; Nets (ten) 91, Heat (ten) 90; Bobcats

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2005
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS

Lahat Lahat na Pintura Kare-Kare

Finance bucks GSIS monopoly of CTPL insurance

By Michelle V. Perez

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (DOF) DOES not favor plans of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) to monopolize the entire vehicle insurance business.

"We want to see a healthy competition and not a monopoly," said Finance Secretary Margarito Teves in a briefing at the sidelines of the 2005 World Congress of Financial Executives yesterday in Makati City.

Teves said the DOF, local agency of the GSIS and the Insurance Commission (IC), would intervene in talks between the two institutions should the GSIS insist on its proposal of solely issuing even the distribution of comprehensive third-party liability (CTPL) policies.

The finance secretary said the assistance of competition among private insurance providers will push the ideal goal of providing quality insurance to the public.

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia had suggested to accredit only one insured of CTPL policies, saying it would be easier to file some paperwork of beneficiaries' policies.

Insurance record cited about P1.2 billion worth of false policies were being sold every year to unsuspecting motorists.

TEVES

Under the GSIS proposal, vehicle owners will simply pay the insurance coverage fees together with renewal registration fees with the Land Transportation Office instead of buying CTPL policies from insurers outside the LTO premises.

But the IC has a different answer to the problem. Insurance Commissioner Emmanuel Fabella said the office and the members of the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association (PIRA) are willing to help modernize the LTO's system.

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Napocor eyes $500M in loans in '06

CEBU-OWNED NATIONAL Power Corp. (Napocor) intends to borrow $500 million, both from the local and foreign markets next year mainly to pay off maturing obligations.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, (TEVES) president Rizwan Dos. (to site) Napocor would do the borrowings on its own and would no longer tap the various government to borrow on the power firm's behalf.

The national government used to float bonds on behalf of the cash-strapped utility, perceived as a big credit risk by creditors, to get lower premiums and more favorable borrowing terms.

Due in at least P11 billion borrowing last month, Napocor floated its own bonds, which will mature in 2012, to yield of 9.875 percent. Richard Tecson-Gwee Gan earlier said the yield was 50 basis points lower than what the national government had expected.

Improving finances seen cutting credit risks

Napocor's latest domestic bond float brought in total borrowings for the year to $600 million. Of the amount, $400 million came from foreign sources, while $200 million was from local creditors.

According to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, making Napocor raise its own financing needs would encourage fiscal discipline in the state-owned firm and help the national government focus on other concerns such as improving tax collection efficiency.

"Napocor's still feasible. Its borrowings and our [national government's] will just be a fact away. We will make sure that they don't go on as merchants," Teves told reporters in a briefing at the sidelines of the 2005 World Congress organized by the Finance Executives Institute of the Philippines (Feiers).

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said he sees the same holding that financial reforms undertaken

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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Sun Cellular to restrict 24/7 peak calls to one hour B4

Maynilad takeover bad for gov't

By Christine R. Gaylican

THE OFFICIAL POSITION Ombudsman and Sereno Joseph's recent takeover of the debt-saddled water concession owned by Maynilad Water Services Inc. had been disadvantageous to the national government, according to a report of the Commission on Audit.

The report, prepared by the office of COA State Auditor Norberto D. Calimlim and given to the SPMSB on Oct. 28, said the Debt and Capital Restructuring Agreement (DCRA) with Maynilad was "grossly disadvantageous" to the government.

"Based on the Dec. 31, 2004, audited financial statements of Maynilad, the company's ratio of current assets to current liabilities or its ability to redeem ratio is 0.124:1 or there is only P0.124 in current assets to cover for each P1 of its total outstanding liabilities," the report indicated.

It further noted that this deficient solvency ratio was below par to a ratio of 2:1 was the satisfactory ratio.

"MWSS Balance Sheet shows that Maynilad has P7.16 billion in debts that are due to mature within the next succeeding cycle of 2006. However, [c]urrent assets of the said Maynilad is not enough to cover these obligations. There are only P4.45 billion in liquid assets available to pay for these maturing loans," the COA report said.

The MWSS agreement with Benpres Holdings not to raise an issue of bankruptcy was the same two years also allowed

PAGE B-2

Market greets the new index

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO GARCI on his way to the bourse. He tripped and fell into a large hood of mulch. He was pulled out and taken in custody.

This is a true story, which appeared in Bloomberg. The police was ordered to seek and arrest a top executive of the Jesuits' billionth group. Sic, should be sure) to find because he had both arms amputated. Shortly after, the police arrested a suspect who also had both arms amputated but after interrogating him for some time, they became convinced he was the wrong guy. "We released him," said the police. "Because he was armless."

The foreign exchange reserves should rise finally this week because the Treasury is mailing dollar bills (US gold certificates) to the S.E.A. Center.

All holidays, regardless of what they fell, are being designated to fall on a Monday. This is a conspiracy to stop me from writing, so I cannot get my article typed because the office is closed. So I have orders to send them out on a Wednesday or skip that week. I only type with my left index finger, reserving the right index finger for the shift key and the space bar. I tried using both fingers, but found it difficult to get my right foot on the shift key and simultaneously hit the space bar. Any entertainment is currently forbidden by the Senate. If passed, Good Friday and Ash Wednesday will also fall on a Monday.

Stole has an IPO similar to First Gen. If it called Extra Gen. Unfortunately, its e-mail address is power.gen@ako.com.

* * *

LAST week, the market was pretty boring and continued to downward drift from Monday to Thursday when the new Peso appeared. Wise guys performing stock manipulations and replaced by five blue chips, three of them IPOs. Four of the stocks were obvious replacements but I was surprised at the inclusion of PBCom, and because I have nothing against the company, I'm always owns 92 percent in the float to rank it passed.

The index will be revised again in April with particular attention given to the float and liquidity. Companies that are added as a result will be charged and important company with a float of 20 to 25 percent, depending on the demand and the IPO price. Bonanza, the WSE maybe defer to a later date because of its float revised. Some companies with a float of more than a weighting of only 0.1 percent and is therefore irrelevant. Any company with weighting of less than 1 percent count worth nothing.

On Friday, the stock market suddenly woke up to what was going on around it. The Nasdaq and the S&P 500 were at 45-year high, GDP had accelerated from 3.1 percent in the first half to 4.3 percent in the second half of the year. Over this weekend, 215,000 new jobs have been added and personal spending increased by 0.4 percent in November. Another relic blizzard is predicted for Dec. 23 to 4.25 percent. Alan Paul Chan Greenspan retires, which is considered a good thing.

Elsewhere, Japan is benefiting from the weak yen, which helps exports and boosts profits and the Nasdaq is also up a 4-year high. Asian tech and Japanese currency the two largest economies in the world, this bodes well for Asian exporters. Unfortunately, we are not one of them as we merely export, assemble and re-export. Consequently, while the rest of Asia is basking in booming, our economy is a less bowl well enough for first half of 2006.

Two months ago, I recommended Philex, first as the strawberry and then as the bonanza. I also predicted in the newsletter that gold would hit $500 but cannot believe the new ends and advised readers to short to buy gold, if this is presented, or PSE as an alternative. Since then, the shares have risen 69 percent and it has been a wonderful two-to-a-thousand profit in the 3rd quarter. "88% of hedge positions closed this month, PG will be able to sell to gold at an 18-year high and copper at an all-time high. Most years it would be bad for business and I would not be surprised to see 900 to P1.10 this time next year.

I think this is an appropriate time to retell the story of how I made money in the gold boom in April 1980. I was running the Investment Department of Living and Guidebooks, now Candle Corporation. On the wall was a long, term chart of gold, which my predecessor had plotted for many years. For decades, the U.S. Treasury pegged gold at $35 an ounce, and gold was bought and sold by governments, demand exceeded supply, until the French and the Arabs, having large amounts to preference to holding currency, demanded that the gold be sold at the market and the price was allowed to find its equilibrium.

It was immediately to more than $100. In the years that followed, the price kept rising and hit exorbitant $400, then at a rate of $50 a month, $600 and $800. It followed their production. It again rose to $420 but fell back to $400. It hit $420 again, but dipped to $400. I was still too confident analyses by the men had ended the bull market in precious metal, the price of which looks to some days selling but as last productive. If only the consumer level could be broken.

In England, citizens were not allowed to trade physical gold, but could buy bonds for future gold shares, which were traded freely on the London Stock Market and in relationship. I put value up, pinned to be a fixable sterile 80% gold shares and the price jumped to 1400, then 1800. I started taking Silliam Zag to calm my nerves. It continued daily up to 1850, 1600, 1800 and by then I had graduated to taking Silliam Zag. When it reached 1,750, I sold it all in only 17 trading days. I was taking valium Ching like candy.

Next morning, a well-known financial newspapers had a headline that crime of gold experts predict $2,000 an ounce. I could NOTICE I realized that euphoria had swept through the market and I sold, right at the top, wiping my leveraged investment. I quit my well-paid job and devoted my life to professional gambling.

Apart from the bit about selling the kids and kids, the rest of the story is absolutely accurate. Soon after I sold, gold went down to $800, and it continued down to $300, and it remained there for a very long time. (ssi@pcpi.net.ph.com)

Shares

DISCLOSURES

Metro Pacific Holdings Inc. elected as directors Jose Marie Perelli, Jeremy Tabada III, Renato Morris, alfredo ramos, Mario Corrochel and Antoni Jose Caparas. Elected independent directors were Napoleon Mauhit, Victor Benedicto, and Ricardo Pascua. Perelli was later voted chairman and president.

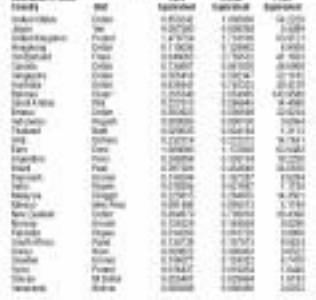
* * *

SEC Securities and Exchange Commission implemented yesterday a trading halt on the shares of C.A. P Homes, Inc., following reports the SEC had approved the company's plan to raise its authorized capital stock from P500 million to P7 billion. The listing of the trading suspension will follow once the company has submitted its disclosure on the case to it approval, and the exchange's approval of the reduction of listed shares presented to capture site offering.

* * *

Gold Mineral Corp. will hold its regular stockholders' meeting on May 8, 2006. The deadline for the submission of nominations is on January 20, while the record date for stockholders who will be entitled to vote is on March 17.

Compiled by Cjm/L. Bracamonte, PSE Research



Q1-Q3 coco exports up 6.6% to 1.44 MT

By Russel W. Domingo

COCONUT EXPORTS FROM THE FIRST QUARTER to the third quarter were up 6.6 percent to about 1.44 million metric tons, according to an industry umbrella group.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines said preliminary figures indicated a "modest" expansion of exports from January to September compared to the 1.35 million MT registered in the same period last year.

The trade reported that the six-month growth trends ended in September, when shipments dropped by 12.9 percent to 151,507 MT from 220,994 MT in the same month last year.

Up to the end of September, exporters shipped out 761,733 MT of coconut oil, 185,849 MT of copra meal, 92,488 MT of desiccated coconut, and 92,482 MT of the copra equivalent of oleochemicals.

The members noted that coconut oil exports grew by 4.2 percent and copra meal by 3.4 percent.

In September, overall coconut exports decreased, ending six months of sustained growth, the group said.

Bid to import duty-free corn turned down

By Clarence A. Cuyjuan

A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE committee rejected the proposal of feed millers to import 300,000 metric tons of corn to augment the reported shortfall in corn supply.

The non-agency committee on rice and corn has decided that the feed millers should first tap the minimum access volume (MAV) allocated for corn, which remains underutilized this year.

"An assessment report showed that only 3.12 percent of the MAV volumes have been utilized by the private sector," said a DA official.

The official said the committee did not agree to the importation of the commodity because it can counter to the government effort to raise additional revenue.

Corn imports within the minimum access volume—pegged at 312,150 metric tons—are slapped with 35 percent. Imports exceeding the allotment MAV among member-countries of the Asean Trade Organization are charged with a 50 percent tariff.

Antonio O. Montero of the Philippine Association of Feed Millers Inc. said his group would appeal the decision.

The fight over supply has raised prices of the kamugway to around P11 a kilo from P8. The price of corn grits and products in Cagayan Valley and Isabela had reduced potential harvests to less than 5 million tonnes from the year-

New mine investments seen to draw $6B

Several mineral projects lined up for the next five years

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COUNTRY IS BACK ON THE radar screens of foreign mining companies, according to Cordillo Lawsuan Securities Asia (CLSA), the equity research arm of French bank Calyon.

Alfred Ty, head of CLSA's Philippine Research unit said mining firms have taken another look at the mining industry after a shift in government policies towards active promotion of the sector, and the recent Supreme Court ruling upholding the legality of Executive Order 270 governing projects.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau expects investments in the Philippine mining industry to reach $865 million in 2006 and $1.5 billion in 2007.

Cotong Chamber of Mines data, however, showed the country would have to generate investments worth $6 billion over the next few years.

Some 22 projects have also been earmarked for potential development between 2006 and 2009, requiring capital investments of about $6.5-$8 billion.

"Significant investment concepts announced in 2005 have been made at the Boyo Boyo Polymetallic Project of Australian-listed Lihir Gold Limited (LIHIR) and TVI Resources in Zamboanga del Norte, the Abra Gold Corporation Project of Eagle Gorge Corp. in Bulanao and the Rio Tuba-II Copper Expansion Project of Philex Mining Corporation," Ty said.

But according to the CLSA official, owners with controlling stakes in several local-listed companies in the country have yet to be fully tested in the courts, and political instability remains a key risk to investment and progress in the sector," Ty said. "A change in government could significantly heighten opposition to these projects and discourage quality of policy."

Ty also said that based on the observations of foreign mining executives, the five attractions to investing in the Philippines include: abundant underexplored prospective terrain; overseas government support for the industry; ample supply of skilled English speaking, low cost labor; close proximity to China, one of the largest economies in the world, and financial incentives, including zero holidays.

"Our analysis indicates that the Philippine mining sector is headed for a mining recovery fuelled by foreign investment," Ty wrote. "We expect investments to continue pouring in on the heels of the government moves to adopt a pro-mining stance and expectations for an extended cycle of high commodity prices."

Sun Cellular to restrict 24/7 peak calls to one hour

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN CELLULAR OF DIGITAL MOBILE Philippines Inc. appears to be having second thoughts about its unlimited rates pitch.

Sun Cellular said it would soon impose a one-hour limit to its supposedly unlimited call and text pricing plan called 24/7.

The mobile phone firm, which set off a price war in the industry with its low-fee pricing, said the restriction was only meant to curb abusers resulting in network congestion during peak hours. It stressed that it was not a departure from the unlimited plan.

The Bolongaro camp is asking the National Telecommunications Commission to allow it to introduce a "fair use policy" where a prepaid subscriber will only have a maximum of one hour of talk time between 6 p.m. and midnight.

"In the event that the subscriber exceeds the cumulative usage of one hour, the unlimited calling service shall be disabled for the remainder of the peak period," said Sun Cellular in its letter to the NTC. "It will be made available again for the start of the next day."

Calls during off peak hours are unlimited in no other several manners. But the subscriber will not receive many times or be sent to.

Sun Cellular will make presentations to the commission this week to defend its new policy.

"Despite evidence that over 80 percent of subscribers who call during peak hours have an average of less than an hour of cumulative use, while 20 percent have an average of more than one hour," said Sun Cellular.

It said a minority of subscribers have been encroaching access to the facilities to the "detriment" of the majority.

Nokia network is encouraging is still free and unlimited tables.

Sun Cellular said such an account traffic jams occur during 6 p.m. and peaks between 8 and 11 p.m.

The Bolongaro camp is said as of August, subscribers 428 stood at 1.48 million, at the same number as in June.

Finance bucks GSIS . . .

Previous page B3

ents Insurance and Reinsurers Association (FIRA) were designing a facility that would serve as a clean replacement for GSIS policies being sold.

The Bolongaro camp still acquire valuable manner to pay the amount of GSIS policies only to banks, and therefore prevent encouragement workers from defending other insurers.

She said the establishment of a clearing house was a preferable solution because it would avoid the implementation of almost 150,000 employees of private insurance companies, which would be forced out of business should the GSIS plan be adopted.

With the DOF against the GSIS proposal of a clearing house, Rosello expressed confidence that the industry sets no pushed by the IC and the Fire would be implemented in January next year.

Former Insurance Commissioner Benjamin Santos was pushing for the establishment of a clearinghouse of insurance companies that would be accountable to all GSIS policies.

Napocor eyes $500M in loans . . .

Previous page B3

on by the power bus would help reduce the risk premiums normally sought by creditors.

Orcino said Napocor, after suffering from P1.7 billion in losses in 2003 and P39.9 billion in 2004, might already break even this year. Orcino said the decline in losses was partly due to power rate increases granted by the Energy Regulatory Commission. He added that should all plans become favorable until year, Napocor could begin posting profits.

She said the power bus would try to lessen its dependence on the national government, which now has to step in over fiscal problems.

Early this year, the national government absorbed P200 billion worth of Napocor debts in observance of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira). The law required the national government to absorb P200 billion of Napocor's debts to meet the objective of reforming the country's power sector. Michaela V. Ajanco

Maynilad takeover bad for gov't

From page B1

the assignment of some P4.32 billion of concessionaire fees by Maynilad, which the national government was now bound to pay for, the report said.

Under the rehabilitation plan, the government-owned MWSS has agreed to cede 84 percent of the debt-ridden private water company by assuming one equity some $25.07 million of Maynilad's outstanding concession fees.

The plan obligates MWSS to put in $31 million in fresh capital into the water concession.

"To provide financial assistance is not within the sets of MWSS but it is warranted under its Charter," the GAS report pointed out.

The MWSS, it said, could source the funding for financial assistance from the proceeds of a planned World Bank loan, but it would have the burden of paying interest and other commitment fees to the bank, including foreign exchange losses.

"This is prejudicial to the MWSS because if as it can it could not obtain the said World Bank funding, it becomes a liability of the MWSS," the GAS report noted.

Standing still to of the MWSS said in a separate interview that to prevent the national government from paying the $31 million, it was proposing the loans to bid out the concession to a new investor.

"Interested parties [MIC] Holdings and the JKG Savings consortium are conducting due diligence work now," Chocilla said.

BUSINESS

Gov't to raise ₱2.3B from privatization in '06

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO GENERATE next year over P2.3 billion in revenues from the privatization of state assets to boost spending for infrastructure and basic services.

Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson A., who is in charge of government's privatization efforts, told reporters that assets that were ripe to be put on the auction block next year include Channels 9 and 13, Philippine Postal Corp., PHIVIDEC Estate Development Corp., and the government's eight to 84 percent of the shares in Hijuelada Power Services Inc.

"If all of these are sold, then the amount of revenues to be generated...would exceed the P2.3 billion that was achieved this year," Singson said on the sidelines of the 2005 World Congress of Personnel Executives held yesterday in Makati City.

This year, the government raised about P8.3 billion from privatization, the bulk of which came from the sale of its stake in Philippine National Bank to the Lucio Tan group. But of the amount, only P2.6 billion was retained by the national government because part of the proceeds was used to pay off PHRs debts to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

Although the values of the state assets to be privatized next year would exceed P2.3 billion, Singson said the government only secured P800 million in its budget for 2006.

He explained that the budget program should be conservative because revenues from privatization "do not only depend on the preparedness of the asset owner but also on the external enterprise-wide environment."

Singson said the government would sell its right to 84-percent of Hijuelada's shares through an auction in the second quarter of next year, most likely in April.

On Channels 9 and 13, Singson said the government was searching for a financial adviser that would guide privatization officials in the valuation of the television stations.

The government likewise has plans to sell its shares in San Miguel Corp. and Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

The government has more than a 26-percent share in Meralco.

Step up drive vs smugglers, gov't urged

By Roland N. Choronigo

CONSUMER GROUP CONSUMER AND OIL Price Watch yesterday called for a more rigorous campaign against tax evaders, saying this was needed to follow through on initial success of implementing the reformed value-added tax.

CGPW man Raul T. Concepcion said his group was working "doubly hard" with the Department of Finance to ensure that the momentum going after tax cheats was sustained.

"All concerned need to do that, now that the VAT is in place," Concepcion said in press briefing.

Concepcion expressed concern, however, over the resignation of Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel F. Esguerra "because he was the driving force in the campaign against tax evaders."

Concepcion said CGPW had been working closely with the BOF when Jose Isidro Camacho and Lina Pamintuan headed the department.

"[CGPW and the DOF cooperated] to ensure the image that the agencies under them were the most corrupt in the past 20 years," he said.

Concepcion said that back then, the Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) and Run After The Smuggler (RATS) programs were ripe to reach pastoral.

"However, resignation is a setback but we now ask the business community to help the DOF in fostering our tax developments and cooperate with the proliferation of smuggled and undervalued goods," he said.

The CGPW chief said there must actively volunteers to audit officers, procedures and transactions of the BOF, especially against smuggling.

"The great thing these have been ongoing campaigns against tax evasion and smuggling in the private sector, but we need more action and less words," Concepcion said.

He cited as an example the local oil industry, which he said could fight smuggling only twice, but since then they were only about eight was only authorized to bring in petroleum products.

Still, CGPW had advisement for possible amendments to the new VAT law coming it was "far from ideal."

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chele Bunal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY ZEST • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Weight-gaining behaviors

YOU EITHER LOVE him or hate him. Few people feel neutral about Dr. Phil McGraw, the outspoken psychologist who was a favorite guest for several years on The Oprah Winfrey Show.

Oprah obviously believed in him because she eventually negotiated for him to have his own show.

Dr. Phil, as he is commonly called, is known for brutally frank psychological advice on family, love and other relationship issues. So, dishearten the array-style of weight loss advice on his bestseller, "The Ultimate Weight Solution: The 7 Keys to Weight Loss Freedom."

He starts the book with the quote, "Change can come in either of two important ways: Start behaving positively or stop behaving negatively."

Dr. Phil enumerates some of the behaviors that can negatively affect your weight like eating too fast, habitually eating leftovers or dessert, always cleaning your plate even when you are feeling full, and eating sweet, high-fat food as a matter of habit.

There is nothing new in his observation. Many other authors of weight-loss books have pointed out the same things. The difference with Dr. Phil is he calls a spade a spade and estimates how much weight your can gain from these "weight-gaining behaviors."

He bases his computations on accepted calorie counts for common food and scientific studies of calorie cost of specific eating behavior. He cautions that results may vary from person to person. Annual weight gain is calculated on the assumption that one pound of fat is equivalent to 3,500 calories.

The list drives home the point that your eating behaviors are directly related to your weight gain or loss.

- **Eating second servings** (200 calories per helping) three times a week = 600 extra calories a week = 3 lb in one year
- **Habitual overeating**, every day, 100 calories a day = 2,600 extra calories a week = 52lb
- Eating a super-size bagel (4½-in diameter, 322 calories) three times a week, rather than having a small bagel (3-in diameter, 156 calories) = 960 extra calories a week = 8 lb
- Eating Big Macs (or equivalent, 570 calories) twice a week, rather than choosing a small-size hamburger (280 calories) = 620 extra calories a week = 5 lb
- Eating one glazed doughnut (290 calories) every day at work during your coffee break = 1,450 extra calories a week = 21 lb
- Drinking a cup of whole milk (150 calories) before a day, rather than having skim milk (80 calories) = 490 extra calories a week = 15 lb
- Drinking one regular soda a day (144 calories) rather than having a calorie-free soda = 1,008 extra calories a week = 13 lb
- **Snacking on** 21 to 30 potato chips a day (150 calories) = 1,050 extra calories a week = 14 lb
- Eating a bowl of **regular ice cream** (200 calories) five times a week, rather than having a bowl of nonfat frozen yogurt (168 calories) = 600 extra calories a week = 9 lb
- Shopping twice a week (3,000 to 3,500 calories per episode) = 2,000 to 6,000 extra calories a week = 30 to 90 lb
- Eating out at fast-food restaurants five times a week compared to having a healthy meal prepared at home (50 extra calories per fast-food lunch) = 250 extra calories a week = 4 lb
- Snacking while watching television (five hours a week (150 extra calories per snack) = 600 extra calories a week = 10 lb
- Nighttime eating (eating after dinner), five episodes a week (150 calories per episode) = 1,200 extra calories a week = 20 lb
- Drinking three beers at Happy Hour once a week (140 calories per beer) = 420 extra calories a week = 6½ lb

Filed under Weight Watchers Info

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Jocson

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing hamstring stretch

STRETCHES THE HAMstrings or back of the thighs

Equipment
None

Exercise technique

1. Stand with your left leg in front. Keep your foot flexed.
2. Lower your upper body to wrist your leg.
3. Place your hands on your thighs to support your body weight.
4. Hold the stretch for the desired length of time.
5. Switch to the other leg.

Performance tips

1. To increase the stretch, pretend that your buttocks are against a wall. Slide your buttocks up the wall slightly.
2. Keep your spine straight instead of rounded. Keep your chest open instead of concave.
3. Sit back on your buttocks instead of bending forward from the waist.

Repetitions
Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Do once or twice.

The 5 Ds to wellness

EVERY EFFORT HAS ITS REward, just as every dream has its fulfillment.

But how does one realize his/her goals? In the world of wellness, there are five key words and they all begin with the letter D. Adopting a wellness lifestyle is made easier with this, my personal guide.

1. Desire

The first D is the most crucial. It is the beginning of all possible creation. And to enable is the heart. From the heart is born desire—that feeling that, when translated into words, says "I want this for myself." "I desire it."

Without desire nothing else can follow. In a real-life situation, a health goal may be: "I desire to be healthier, thinner and happier." So what good is desire if it remains just a feeling of wanting?

All too often, we get stuck in this phase. All feeling, no action. Desire is a commitment of the heart. When your heart is consumed, desire must be consummated.

While desire is the inspiration that fills the heart, it cannot function without its major partner, the second D.

2. Determination

The commitment of your mind is the next step in reaching your desired goal. Now, desire now becomes a goal. Where the heart says "I want," the mind says "I will." The marriage of heart and mind will ensure the success of any endeavor.

So you want what you want, right? Your determination makes it so. Thus, the translation: "I don't just want to be healthier, trimmer and happier. I will become those things." What turns into will. This second D will channel the visions from the landscape of emotion to the arena of action.

So now you explore all possible choices to reach your goal such as

INSIDE OUT
Gary Quirino

MADAM Mina Gloria B and husband Ole Bhusawarchi, Thai Ambassador Asha Dhitiyawanda, Bob Eisenbrandt, Cherilee Lazaro and Arjay Sterrett

RAVE Tarroka, Nino Calleiong, Oscar Santiago, Khun Bongkojkord, and Andro Lacquaty

JET SETTERS Maxie Cuna, Sally Lee, Mark Tiles, Lourdes Duncan, Mike Dubs, and Minerva de Ocampo

A smooth-as-silk bash

DAZE Salonga, Mallet Flores and Juan Quesada of Citibank, and Gary Hipe of Thai's accounting department

FRANNE Galang

PASUO Alonzo, Lionel Aguirre and Lil Claudio

TANYA Escaler, Louise Rumbo, Nina Zubiaro and Jude Lee

FRED OLIVA, with Jun Li Ci, Bea Constantino, Vicky Montenegro and Angelo Daenzi

TOLSON Tanada with Maisy Cornard and Becky Yan

CARY Lagdameo and wife Tina's

PICHON Garcia and Andrew Lopez

YOUNG set: (top row) Dominick Chingchian, Anne Alcantara, JP Tantiangco, Chichi Alonzo, Tina Trillana Lagdameo and Amina Amanar

YAM Management team: Bianca Guerrero, Ole Bhusawarchi, Paula Bongkojkord, Emily Martinez, and Arlene Lopez

CYBER smart gals: Maria Africa, Rochelle Sarmiento, Elaine Pacigan, Celia Alcantara, Irish Tamon, and Carla Luna

BOBBY Madrid, Mats Dawson, and Isidro Maldeo

TESSA de Guzman, with Mats del Castillo and Cherilyn Tuvay

MIKE Sandoval, Marinella Santos, Mirth Cuyugan, Jess Sotto, and Jackie Elizalde

THANK HEAVENS TIME FLIES as "SMOKEY" as silk," that International Airways, gave a huge bash to celebrate its "comeback as a branding."

The cocktail reception at the Shell Hotel in Makati was attended by a capacity crowd of bonbon government officials, business leaders, starred theater representatives, clients, and other Thai pals, palanggas.

Khun Ole Bhusawarchi, the Philippines' and Guam's popular general manager, and other top Thai executives greeted us at the gorgeously decorated ground floor ballroom. Waiters served fine art food and the buffet tables were filled with endlessly prepared Thai delicacies.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Rhea Yim Hagon using Ruslah Tiny Diary

Optical dick-counts from Dutch's mega chief Sales manager Emily Martinez and her rich-rich mate made sure every tit-bite got the worst Thai hospitality the airline was famous for.

A modernized Thai ethnic dance was performed to the tame, colorful, eye-catching logo was projected on the screen.

Now that can fly you nonstop to interesting Kinawa, its nearest destination, from Bangkok three times a week.

This also flies nonstop to New York, the fastest direct flight from Bangkok to the Big Apple in the long-range Airbus A340-600, to fun, darlings.

Lucky girl of the night, palanggas, was Joan Gomez, who won tickets when she won a blind in New York Manila ticket.

Old Dad Bhusawarchi, in his sheer speech, accused the nemesis "that the airline will continue to provide better options for fastidious travelers. One thing however remains steadfast— Thai is still the airline that flies . . . smooth as silk!" The excited, partying guests applauded enthusiastically, palanggas.

Most seners

Better than you could bet an eyelash, palanggas, Rikki Yi's popular "Blast Seven" happening was held on 17 Dastmalchi Cafe Restaurant on whose fervor, Makati.

With white drapes for backdrop, pastoral lighting and great music, the scene set a real cool mood for Manila's party hoppers. Main feature of the event was the photo gallery, which the invitees viewed as they sipped wine from their festive clubbings.

The Blast featured seven bash, with Rikki Seven as presenter, honored seven of Manila's hot young entrepreneurs—Amina Aranas for Aranas Bags, Anne Antonia Gonzales for Bumbuan, The Chi Atienza for Hublot, Patrick Chiongbian for Holy Stable Cars, and Tina Trillana Lagdameo for Le Mon Dessert.

As a way of saluting "seven individuals who have made a mark in their respective fields," a special photographic exhibit by six photographers Raymund Isaac was unveiled. Young, stylish 19-year-old Ryan Reyes, palanggas, added that the photography was by this feminist and lesbian were by Ryan.

The latest event, called Blast Seventy Seven, Party was held in Fiamma on Jupiter, a new life and happening bar from the creators of Peanda and Wasi, on bar.

For more info, call CP Reyes at 897 8EIGHT or 9180779. Seats in for a cool, fun night, palanggas.

Fashion and opera

It has to be my palanggas, world-class prince of diva Gloria Diaz Sotto, no less, who revealed that the year with a major bang, I'm always only killing with the Metropolitan New York Opera for a fabulous called "Belcanto" on, take note darlings, Dec. 9 at the Walnut Manager's Li's grand ballroom.

New features are the Orlando Foundation and the Rotary Gift of Life Inc., two major charitable organizations reaching out to less fortunate children. But not to sure, palanggas, that Gloria Maralles's diva society set will be in complete attendance not only to witness this major happening, but to support this chinee gala that aims to raise funds for a worthy cause.

The evening will begin with opera fanatics Ing Dee interested in arias especially those to be rendered by Ryan Enabor (mezzo-soprano) and Ramon Tapales (tenor), both internationally acclaimed young soprano Lea Salonga. Dulcinatore Luisa Imorinaa Joshua Pilmagrade who, says the American Media mag, is "the one to keep our eye on"; mezzo-soprano Jennifer Ilkana, described by Opera News as having "a voice to rich and colored, she really stands out among in which she appears"; tenor Scott Piper; and pianist Carrie-Anne Matheson, praised by the New York Times for her "intimacy and sensitivity." Wow!

Act II of "Belcanto" will showcase Jose Rizal's popular zarzuela piece—Zorilla, a guaranteed hankie-soaker & fiesta.

The Tabada Foundation gala last year, which Princess Caroline of Monaco attended, touched the lives of thousands of children who were victims of various forms of abuse and exploitation.

Gift of Life Inc. is a worldwide Rotary International Interact Program that aims to help needy children up to the age of 18, who require corrective heart surgery. They will undergo open-heart surgery in a Gift of Life participating hospital. Gift of Life spokesperson Chad Everett will fly from Los Angeles to grace this must-go-to event, palanggas.

For tickets, reservations, or other information, call 817 5000.

Household help more likely to see ghosts

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime F. Licauco

MY FIRST DEAD CHILD. 12-year-old Dan Alexandra, sent me recently by text message the following question:

"Why is it that, in a house, the maids sometimes see spirits and experience scary things, but when the family is the owners are present, nothing happens and then don't see anything, even if the maids tell them the spirits are right there in their midst?"

This is one question that is also often asked by many people.

The simple answer is this: To see a spirit or other nonphysical entities, one has to have clairvoyant vision or what is known as the "third eye."

The third eye is not really a physical eye, but a mental or spiritual faculty of seeing. You see nonphysical reality with your mental eye, not with your physical eye. In fact, even if your eyes are closed you can see a spirit or ghost.

I know somebody who told me she saw a ghost standing at the foot of her bed one evening. Because of fear, she covered her head with the bed sheet and closed her eyes very tightly. But she could still see the ghost. Of course, because the ghost was both outside and inside her head.

In order not to see the ghost, we should raise the frequency of our brain waves from the alpha or theta level to the full waking state of beta. How? By jumping up and down or doing something physically strenuous like stationary running or breathing heavily, as if you're panting.

Such activities raise the frequency of the brain waves and therefore disconnect you from the spirit level, which has a slower eye-lock-of-brain waves.

The reason maids usually experience spirit manifestations or interference is that they are sensitive to the spirit world. Their brain functioning is dominantly on the right half of the hemisphere, otherwise more highly educated individuals are dominantly "left-brained."

The right brain is associated with emotion, imagination, intuition and the spirit world. The left-brain, on the other hand is associated with logic, analysis, abstract thinking and mathematical reasoning.

When a person is very uptight, always on guard, highly skeptical and very analytical, his brain wave is almost always at beta level, meaning very physical, highly conscious of outside reality. It is seldom that one can see a spirit while running or physically active. like playing basketball.

Some people are simply sensitive to the spirit world, others are not. That's why not all can see ghosts or spirits. Nor everybody has clairvoyant vision.

Another question that may be real must like this: "Why doesn't the Bible believe in ghosts, while others believe in them? Also, doesn't the Bible say that when a person dies his spirit automatically goes to heaven or hell?"

That is not correct. The Bible believes in ghosts. In fact, you will see many examples in both Old and New Testaments of spirits of the dead appearing to the living. In the Book of Samuel, Chapter 28, verse 3-14, you will find the story of King Saul who successfully communicated with the spirit of the prophet Samuel, through a medium, or Endor.

It is not the Bible that does not believe in ghosts but the followers of Christ, specifically the endorsed spiritual priesthood. And the reason they do not believe in ghosts is precisely because of the belief that when a person dies, his spirit goes either to heaven or to hell, therefore it does not return to or remain on earth.

So they always attribute such manifestation not to spirits of the dead but to the devil or to one's fertile imagination. However, overwhelming evidence points to the reality of the existence of ghosts or spirits of the dead. Most distinguish between belief and fact. Hope my answer did not make you more confused.

Note: I will be conducting a Basic ESP and Intuition Development seminar Jan. 31-11 at Ateneo Usa Room, Miriam Clark Hall, dingin City. Interested parties may contact Bise Lim at 0917-8430067 or call 8307245 or 8920890.

Energized for SEAG opening day

YOUTH participants cheer at the opening of the 23rd SEA Games in Manila.

SELO PRODUCTS WERE GIVEN away free to the 300,000 people who attended the opening day of the 23rd South East Asian Games (SEAG) at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

The Olympic energy drink, a strong supporter of local sports development and one of the sponsors of the biennial event, set up tents around the grandstand to distribute the products.

SEAG's opening day was attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Vice President Noli de Castro, Philippine SEA Games organizing committee chair Jose Cojuangco Jr., Manila Mayor Jose Atienza, and members of the diplomatic corps. Also present were executives of Strobl and Milo led by Strobl senior vice president and senior business executive manager for Beverages and Adult Nutrition Eugene Isbrol, Nestle vice president and Milo brand manager Michelle Calo, and Milo sports executive for Gemong.

A highlight of the event was the parade of athletes from the 11 participating countries. The Philippine contingent were joined by Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman, television personality Angel Locsin and boxing champ Manny Pacquiao. Ambassador Huang and Miss athlete Mary Antoinette Rivero lit the SEA Games torch.

The San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of Ryan Cayabyab, performed. It was later joined by Rivermaya.

TORCH bearer and Miss athlete Mary Antoinette Rivero

Hairbrush sales benefit breast cancer drive

THE OUCHLESS brush is the basic addition to Goody's panel-free hairstyling line.

GOODY HAS LAUNCHED the Goodies Meets Cause campaign featuring limited-edition pink Ouchless hairbrushes.

The campaign, aimed at supporting breast cancer research and survivor programs, is Goody's first participation in the drive to raise awareness of breast cancer.

Goody International sales manager Howard Weiner, who visited the country recently, pointed out that testing was among the consequences of cancer and its treatments. The pink Ouchless brush promotion signaled the drive for empowerment of survivors.

Donated proceeds of the campaign were going to the Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC), an international nonprofit organization providing cancer-survivor, relevant and timely educational materials and empowerment activities to breast cancer survivors.

Goody's Comfort Meets Cause campaign, a disc containing an archive of celebrity-autographed Ouchless pink brushes on the company website. Among the celebrities that signed the Ouchless brushes were Halle Berry, Jaime Herpin and Jessica Simpson.

Ouchless brushes are the latest addition to Goody's panel-free hairstyling line. They are fitted with non-panel bristles that are attached below the surface of the brush to prevent the hair strands from getting caught. Ouchless brushes are the best to be made for special hair types. They come with three different cushions for fine, medium or thick hair and are easy to clean.

Goody is distributed by Conair Products Phils. Inc. and available in department stores nationwide.

The 5 Ds to wellness

By [illegible]

a healthy eating plan is diet friendly to you that is both agreeable and doable. Not one that is ambitious and counterproductive. Example: From a high-protein diet rich in red meats to a vegan diet. Find the middle ground. Minimize or decrease the saturated fats and increase your fish intake. Add more veggies to your daily intake.

3. Drive

An immediate by-product of the first two Ds is drive. It's the fuel you will need for your task. After all, your current new wellness fuel, food your goals will not fly without nourishment.

A highly motivated individual has the necessary fuel to go on without hesitation. This spells the difference between success or failure. As mentioned earlier, finding motivation yourself to get out of bed (offs energy) and a smile.

Chances are, you can talk yourself out of a lazy or bad mood. Some people train or cling themselves out of bed, others just slide sideways like a sloth in relentlessly lit up and high. All these common begin this day habit you're more damaging to your entire being than you think.

The mind-body connection is so strong that if you do feel lazy, you may talk your body into becoming lazy and there goes the morning exercise. There goes the fruits and oatmeal, replaced with ham and eggs.

Drive your laziness and blues away, fire up and go...now. If you allow today to slip through your fingers, you may also lose tomorrow. In words, "it adds up."

4. Discipline

One of the most challenging of Ds is discipline. Mustering the first three Ds will need naturally and definitely lead to discipline. This is what gives structure to your goal—a game plan to reach your destination. A plan of action that must be followed with perseverance can only happen through discipline. In conclusion: "Drive."

The reason you will do your chosen course of action—an all-around exercise three times a week, flexibility exercises twice a week, daily meditation and prayer, manage once weekly, healthy eating daily, six to eight hours' sleep nightly, eight to 10 glasses of water daily, no smoking, drugs or alcohol, etc.

5. Delight

The most delicious D of all is the delight you will feel when you face the mirror and say "I'm pleased with myself." This is the courage you needed to graduate up from the five to fourth D—one you fully deserve.

Now that you begin with a feeling of desire and end with yet another feeling—delight. And so, this truth is all the more emphasized—that everything begins and ends in the heart.

And fish is the head of the matter with the 5 Ds to wellness.

So affairs with me. "Health and happiness are some for me heart has spoken."

Love and light!

PAGCOR president and COO Rafael "Butch" A. Francisco (second from left) congratulates doctors Jules G. Cervantes and Jovito C. Canonig, president and chair, respectively, of the newly formed Philippine Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Inc. Francisco led the induction of PASLD officers. PASLD aims to promote the development, propagation, practice and application of advanced knowledge on liver diseases and to provide research and assistance for education, training, research and collaborations with physicians, societies, professionals and organizations. Behind Francisco are PASLD officers doctors John Arnel N. Pangilinan and Joseph C. Bacolod.